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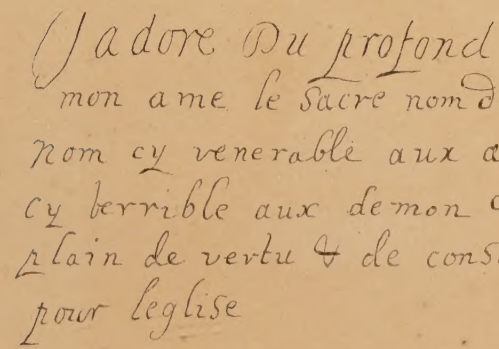
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mon ame le Sacre nom de jesus
nom cy venerable aux anges
cy terrible aux demon & cy
plain de vertu & de consolation
pour leglise

(Extract from a collection of prayers composed for her use.)

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HISTORY

OF

BLESSED MARGARET MARY,

A RELIGIOUS OF THE VISITATION OF ST. MARY;

AND OF THE

ORIGIN OF DEVOTION TO THE HEART OF JESUS.

BY

FATHER CH. DANIEL, S. J.

TRANSLATED BY THE AUTHORESS OF THE "LIFE OF CATHARINE McAULEY."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE SAME.

PERMISSU SUPERIORUM.

Ah! how sweet it is to die, after having had a constant devotion to the Sacred Heart of Him who is to judge us."—MARGARET MARY.

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TO

MARY, UNDER HER SWEET TITLE

OF

"OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART,"

THIS

TRANSLATION IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED, IN

THE HOPE

THAT, THROUGH HER ADVOCACY,

IT MAY

THE MORE EFFECTUALLY CONDUCE TO THE PROPAGATION

OF

DEVOTION TO THE HEART OF JESUS.

Rec. 45 48

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The above headings and subdivisions of this work are not found in the original. We have added them to make the work more easy of reference.

Translator.

INTRODUCTION.

If this work should not prove one of the most interesting of its kind, the fault may certainly be imputed to the translator. But though the chief subject of it will ever be dear to pious souls, it must be acknowledged that the general interest it will be found to possess, even for many who find other spiritual books tedious, is due chiefly to the skill with which the author has brought into requisition every thing, at all connected with what he treats, that could throw a charm over his pages.

God frequently chooses the weak things of this world to confound the strong, but seldom has He chosen for His purposes an instrument so weak as the apostle of His Sacred Heart. Not, indeed, because she was a woman; He has often selected women for His great enterprises. But when He does so, He ordinarily dowers them with gifts which in some manner fit them for the mission He confides to them. They have the masculine intellect of St. Teresa, or the indomitable energy of St. Jane Frances, or the high-souled enthusiasm of St. Catherine of Sienna; and all this, coupled with other indescribable attractions, throws a poetry about them which fixes the gaze of the world, in interest if not in admiration. But great endowments are sought in vain in our humble Visitandine. Learning, grandeur, fascina-

tion—she possessed them not. She had neither beauty, nor wealth, nor genius to sacrifice. Her rank was merely respectable, and the old farm-house in which she dwelt for so many years is a standing evidence that her home was no fairy palace. Timid and affectionate, her soul is well nigh rent in twain when she stands on the threshold of that monastery to which apparently she will be but a poor acquisition. And yet, she left not her home till the age of twenty-four, nine or ten years after the period of adolescence among her precocious countrywomen. The incidents of her conventual life are few, and, apart from the halo her great mission casts over all connected with her, totally devoid of interest. Indeed, the absence of every gift that could, humanly speaking, be an ornament or a help, shows that her work was done by Him, as indeed He Himself said to her when He first discovered to her the secrets of His Heart: "I have chosen thee as an abyss of unworthiness and ignorance, for the accomplishment of so great a design, in order that all may be done by Me."

In this work Father Daniel has given us the most interesting portions of the Visitation annals, those which relate to the founders and their immediate successors, among whom the Order was planned and its distinctive character formed. We cannot study these beautiful models without recognizing at every turn the spirit of St. Francis de Sales. Our patient author has taken down many a dusty folio of monastic chronicles, and judiciously extracted, for his own bright pages, gems too long hid-

den; and should the metaphor be allowable, we think we may say, without the least disparagement to his superior abilities, that while, as regards strength and grandeur, the oaks and beeches of the work are his own; as to beauty and perfume, the lilies and roses are culled from the anonymous Sisters whose chronicles he has so cleverly used.

These records, simple and beautiful in style, testify that the early Visitandines inscribed on their registers many a name that in the world might have won a permanent place in the annals of literature; and they show, too, that if learned men on becoming monks, even in the most austere Orders, have always been permitted to pursue their studies in the cloister,* the literary ladies who joined religious institutes in such numbers found time to immortalize their respective Orders, while their less talented Sisters carded hemp or presided at the spinning-wheel. These charming chronicles are a mine which the Catholic writer might explore with advantage. Perhaps there could hardly be a more delightful addition made to religious literature than selections from the unpublished annals of the Ursulines, Carmelites, Dominicanesses, &c.

Indeed, the history of the world is quite too much taken up with the world's crimes and misdemeanors.

* The Abbé de Rancé seems to have been of a different opinion, but the founders of the very Order he reformed are against him, for St. Stephen, St. Bernard, &c., were most learned men, and they certainly could not have completed their studies before they entered the cloister. See Mabillon's *Traité des Etudes Monastiques*, in which the studies and schools of monks are abundantly justified.

Not thus will its history be stereotyped in eternity. What is to be in oblivion in heaven ought not surely be so much enlarged on here. Beside, the beauty of virtue is more attractive than the loathsomeness of vice is repelling; and on the young, whose characters are yet unformed, the too minutely chronicled, and perhaps too highly wrought, pictures of crime in which our histories abound, are, in a greater or less degree, demoralizing in their effects. The good, the gentle, the virtuous—have they no charms? Certainly, the learned Father whom we have translated does not think so: he has, and we thank him for it, brought back and around us many of the gentle and affectionate beings of whom our planet has always been prolific, and who, though to them is due, whether in the world or the cloister, most of the happiness that makes life endurable, have been too often overlooked by the historian, who faithfully hands down to an admiring posterity creatures that were a libel on their sex and a disgrace to Christianity, and who certainly will not benefit those that make their acquaintance even on paper.

The charming details of the old convents of France come upon us, in our present artificial society, like stereotyped shadowings of the beautiful simplicity of the patriarchal age. Now we are told of a "dear little Sister" who went to heaven in her thirteenth year; again the fair chronicler quaintly portrays a Religious (she must have been a strong-minded woman in those days), who carried her gun to the monastery, and used to fire it off in the

inclosure whenever the nuns were in apprehension of robbers, but yet did not practice her artillery to such an extent as to neglect for it her spiritual exercises! Now we are dazzled with the oriental equipage the grand cardinal reins up before the old convent, and again, all the grandeur gone off like a meteor, we mingle among the Sisters weeding the garden, chopping wood, nursing their sick, everywhere and under every aspect, redolent of the sweetness and humility of their Blessed Founder.

We almost shudder when we see St. Jane Frances stepping over the prostrate body of her son; we recognize in her something of the spirit of Ambrose when we see her set out for a distant monastery in which the Bishop insisted on keeping a superior in office longer than the rule permitted, and peremptorily informing his Lordship that he must choose between allowing the nuns to keep their rules or to return with her. But we love better to see her, foundress as she was, pause on the threshold of the old convent at Paray, and refuse to bring in her daughter till she ascertains whether this would be agreeable to the little community, though that lady had the Bishop's leave to enter. This is one of the most beautiful passages in Mother de Chantal's beautiful life,* and we owe our knowledge of it to F. Daniel.

* The gracious humility the saint displayed on this occasion is the more striking, as the regulation, concerning the exclusion of seculars from parts of the monastery destined solely for the Sisters, was not so strict as not to be frequently relaxed in favor of persons who had far less claims on the Order than a daughter of the foundress, a lady, too, who had been brought up by the Sisters. Charles II. dined in the refectory of Chaillot. James II. and his consort were frequent visitors

A charming feature in the annals of religious houses is the high-toned courtesy that prevails in all the intercourse between these consecrated virgins. Not the obsequiousness of court ladies, but the cordial, outward expression of the love and reverence due to all, irrespective of accidental circumstances, who renounce the world for Jesus Christ, and which should be paid them, in the first place, by those who have shown their appreciation of this way of perfection by embracing it themselves. The mutual correspondence of the houses of the Visitation affords perfect models of this, and shows that, though the writers had left the world, they continued to retain all the good breeding for which their country is deservedly celebrated. The annals of all Orders have these features, at once so attractive and instructive.

Thus, when Madame Louise, in 1783, received at St. Denis some fugitive Franciscan nuns, the latter knelt before their august benefactress to kiss her hand. But the royal Carmelite was unwilling to accept such homage from her humble guests, nor would she permit them to kiss her hand till she had respectfully saluted them and kissed theirs.*

even in the infirmary of the same house; the latter often dined off the same table as the community. Of course, it is the privilege of royalty to penetrate the cloisters of the strictest orders, but many of less prestige entered the Visitation cloisters. Madame de Montmorency, then and for many years after a secular, was present at the death of St. Jane Frances herself, which occurred in the convent of Moulins.

* The above took place when the Sisters, expelled from their own monastery at Gand, fled to Paris. The Carmelites of St. Denis were not the only persons who showed courtesy to the poor fugitives. On

Another interesting, and perhaps unexpected, feature in these conventual annals is the affection the Religious displayed for their friends in the world and their Sisters in the convent: it is purer, more lasting, and sometimes more enthusiastic, than the mutual love of very dear friends in the world. Saintly persons do not divest themselves of their human affections; oh! no, they only regulate them; perhaps they have naturally far keener sensibilities than other people, and religion but refines them still more. Look at Margaret Mary hesitating for so many years to tear her heart by separating from the friends of her youth; see her loving letters to her "dearest brothers;" hear St. Teresa's account of her departure from her home, though it involved only very partial separation from her friends, since inclosure was not observed in the monastery of her choice. Truly a vocation must be something positive, as Madeleine de Chaugy remarks in her memoir of Madame de Chantal; positive it must be, else it could not achieve its end despite the obstacles raised by the heart's dearest affections. And the ties formed in the cloister are not more easily broken. It nearly crushed the affectionate heart of Catharine McAuley to be obliged to part with her companions in reli-

reaching Breteuil in their flight, they found that the only hotel in the town was occupied by a regiment just arrived. The officers at once offered their apartments to the nuns, and when the priest who accompanied the latter suggested that a little space would suffice for Sisters accustomed to sleep on the ground, the officers exclaimed: "No, Monsieur l'Abbé, your Religious shall not sleep on the ground; leave that to us soldiers."

gion. "The Sisters call it a bitter sorrow," says she, "but what must it be to *me*, who have never yet seen one unamiable Religious?" Saints have felt such partings as only saints can feel. Witness the following extract from Blessed Agnes de Scefi, to her Sister, St. Clare:

"What do I not suffer by being separated from you? You, with whom I had hoped to live and die. It is one of those troubles which ever increase and to which one can see no end. It is a shadow ever darkening; a weary oppression which cannot be cast away. I had hoped that those, who were united in heaven by the same faith and the same conversation, would have on earth the same manner of life and the same death; that the same tomb would inclose those of the same blood and the same nature; but I was deceived. I am forsaken and my soul is overwhelmed with sorrow.

"O my sweet Sisters, pity me, weep with me, and pray God that you may never suffer so terrible a trial! Believe me, there is no sorrow like to this; a sorrow that wrings my heart, a languor that wearies me continually, a fire which unceasingly consumes me. I sigh and weep, and seek for a consolation I am never to find. I sink under the sad thought that I shall never see you more."*

Verily, religion had not deadened her affections; *all* sisters in the world do not mutually show such passionate affection.

The annals of the convent of Chaillot are already famous. They were transferred to the State Paper Office

* Life of St. Clare, by Abbé Demore.

on the dissolution of that house, and are now courteously shown to all who desire to consult them. These piles, the accumulated records of centuries, most confidentially written, jealously guarded from all eyes, save those of the more ancient Sisters, recording events that took place within the shadow of a court, during four reigns and two regencies, do not contain an expression or a sentiment incompatible with the strictest delicacy, else we should have heard of it from persons who examined them, some of whom, as Lord Macaulay and Miss Strickland, for instance, cannot be suspected of undue partiality for the Church or her monastic institutes.

This is a significant fact, and to Protestants, no better argument could be advanced in proof of the piety, the unostentatious goodness of the successive generations of devoted Sisters that lived and died at Chaillot.

But not only do we find the chronicles of religious congregations instinct with every thing gentle and holy, we find, too, among these sweet exotics of the Church—when occasion requires—a patient endurance, a noble bravery, an invincible energy, an unconquerable activity, which go far to prove that the term "weaker sex" is a definition that has nothing to do with the soul. When a lawless band of Calvinists, under William of Orange, attacked, nearly three centuries ago, a convent in the Netherlands, and threatened to hang the Sisters, the latter quietly glanced around to count the trees in the inclosure, and then gently and smilingly said: "We shall be but too happy to give our lives for God; there

are trees enough for your purpose." But though death had no terrors for these cloistered virgins, it was otherwise with the blasphemies, "so painful to their pure ears," to which they were compelled to listen: one of them fell dead with horror. A brigand, touched at this, exclaimed: "These are children of God; let us not stain our hands with the blood of innocents."

Look at that sweet Sister cruelly dragged to the Tree of Liberty, and ordered by her grim captors to shout *vivas* for the republic. She knows nothing about the republic; all her *vivas* are for Jesus Christ.

"My God! what joy! we shall go to Paradise," exclaimed another, when the soldiers, in the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity, came to conduct her to the guillotine. A magistrate, a personal friend of hers, asked her to take the constitutional oath, promising that, once free, he would procure a priest to absolve her. Surprised at his simplicity, she replied with a cheerful smile: "I should not like to put out my eyes on the chance of getting a doctor who could afterwards restore my sight."

Again, look at that long procession of recluses, some of whom have not trod a public street for half a century. There are venerable women, there are mature virgins, there are young maidens; joy beams on every countenance and all their voices unite harmoniously in the glorious *Veni Creator*. The chorus becomes successively a quintette, a quartette, a trio, a duet, and at last a solo; each sweet voice is hushed in death; that woman, that

second mother of the Maccabees, sees the bleeding heads of all she loved, roll, one by one, from the scaffold; she then bends her own withered neck beneath the axe, still singing, after a while murmuring:

Accende lumen sensibus,
Inifunde amorem cordibus,
Infirma nostri corporis,
Virtute firmans perpeti.

The swan's dying notes are sweetest, but the strain is cut short to be resumed in heaven, where the next verse, *Hostam repellas*, may be omitted: a head, whose locks are scant and white, is severed from an aged trunk, and it is left to strangers to chronicle the fate of that valiant band.

It is the same in every land; persecution never finds the Spouses of Christ with lamp untrimmed; and if they escape with their lives, as on the occasion of the Newry riots, 1833, they smile over their demolished walls and windows, though they might laudably weep for the ruin of what was their all in this world. Whence, then, their smiles, their mutual congratulations? The Blessed Sacrament has been preserved from desecration—miraculously they think—what matter about the rest?

The Roman Martyrology is scarcely more eloquent of heroism than annals that record scenes like these.

In the Visitation Order, with which we are at present most concerned, there was a long interval between the days of establishment and the days of persecution, and during this interval it had its most critical periods

of existence, sometimes isolated, sometimes continuous. These we shall see as we trace the virtues, and follow the career of the humble virgin who has become the new glory of that Order, which, but for the devotion taught by her, had perhaps succumbed beneath the weight of obstacles from within and trials from without. Such, at least, is the opinion of her last biographer. Yet, not one of the great names that adorned the Church of France in the seventeenth century casts a halo around the personal history of our saintly Sister. The amiable Fénelon, who could so well appreciate her, was not aware of her existence; the eagle of Meaux never lowered his glance on the humble cloister that witnessed her communications with heaven. She was equally unknown to the great people of the world. That noble and high-minded queen —herself torn from a cloister in her fifteenth year, to become the reluctant bride of the most unfortunate of the Stuarts—who was the first of royal petitioners for a Feast of the Sacred Heart, never laid her beautiful dark eyes on the humble maiden of Paray. Maria Teresa, the saintly queen of France, never heard of her. Madame de Maintenon, who used to boast that she had made piety fashionable in France, never conversed with the gentle lover of the Sacred Heart. Saintly Religious indeed came from afar to gather the burning words that fell from her lips; the people of her obscure little town consulted her, but by the influential personages of her day she was unknown, and therefore unappreciated. She did her work, she fulfilled her mission, but it was clear to the

most casual observer, that it was God who worked in her to will and to accomplish!

It has ever been our opinion, though there is high testimony to the contrary,* that the convent in which our lowly apostle lived was not, in the strictest sense of the word, a relaxed one, for if it had, the fact would be publicly known, and would deter those who entered religion with pure intentions from seeking shelter in its cloisters. St. Alphonsus thought it easier to work out one's salvation amid the snares and dangers of the world than in a relaxed religious house, and this is only too true. Probably the relaxation of Paray was confined chiefly to those whom God had never called thither. What proved detrimental here, is that which has perhaps caused almost every scandal the Church has ever had to deplore: people entering a state for which they had no vocation, and in which they therefore persevere from un-

* "This community, notwithstanding the care and attention of Mother de Saumaise, and the good example of some of the elder Sisters, had fallen into relaxation."—[Bishop Languet's *Life of Margaret Mary.*] When it is remembered that the Bishop was, for many years, spiritual Father to the monastery of Paray, and was personally acquainted with several of the companions of our Blessed Sister, with some of whom he continued to correspond till the close of his life, it will be admitted that he is a high authority. Dalgairus, who writes as follows, is even more severe: "The convent of Paray was not a depraved, but a relaxed one; and Margaret, with her strict and supernatural obedience, her thirst for perfection, and her minute observance of the rule, found a heavy, ignoble cross in the daily insect-stings which the degenerate daughters of St. Francis de Sales inflicted upon her. At times, indeed, insult and outrage were heaped upon her, but in general, she had to bear the slow and steady persecution of silent scorn," &c.—*History of Devotion to the Sacred Heart*, p. 98.

worthy motives. The world insisted on this, the victims were too weak-spirited to make much opposition, the Church remonstrated, but her maternal remonstrances and her heavy anathemas were uttered in vain.

Here is, perhaps, the secret of the relaxation at Paray: the old Burgundian gentry were often as poor as they were proud; if God sent them large families, the younger branches, with or without vocations, were devoted to a life the responsibilities of which God ordinarily enables only those, whom He calls, to sustain. The religious life is a heaven or a hell, according to the dispositions with which it is embraced, and the fidelity with which its duties are practised. The fervent Religious upon whom such subjects were forced, were the chief sufferers—nor were they always blameless, since it was their duty to resist such an imposition—for who will deny that the poor victims of parental ambition were not, in some manner, happier in a convent, generally, too, among the friends and guardians of their childhood—in the house in which they received their education—than they would be in the ruined chateaux of their cruel, despotic fathers, or dependent upon brothers that were willing to purchase aggrandizement at the price of the temporal and perhaps eternal welfare of sisters who, with a morbid, ill-directed nobility of soul, sacrificed themselves at the shrine of family pride.

It may be asked, why did the Church permit such people to make vows? Certainly, the Church, with more than maternal solicitude, has enacted laws enough to

guard against this abuse. These we need not enumerate; *in general** they have proved sufficient to insure every Catholic perfect freedom with reference to choosing a state in life. In some countries, Ireland for example, Bourdaloue's magnificent irony would be only a figure of speech that never had a practical application. That divine told some of the parents of his day, that they were in advance of the perfection of Abraham, who awaited God's command before he essayed to sacrifice his son; they were more generous, they offered the sacrifice when it was not asked; they did more—they persisted in offering it regardless of the Divine warning: "Lay not thine hand upon the child!"

It was no wonder that rich abbeys, when presented by influential friends, were a bait that could lure away vocations of this class. And surely it was not on behalf of the true daughters of St. Francis that it was necessary to petition the king not to give abbeys to any Visitation Religious; and when "multiplied secessions" are bewailed, it was no doubt the most fervent portion of the community that remained at home.

Much has been said regarding the influence Jansenism exercised on the Visitation Order, but this has probably been greatly exaggerated. Indeed, it seems extraordinary that such a heresy could ever get the slightest footing among the daughters of St. Francis, for nothing

* Every one who has read *I Promessi Sposi* will remember how *Gertrudina*, through fear of her tyrannical father, succeeded in deceiving the Vicar who examined her into the belief that she had a religious vocation. Yet this scene may be overdrawn.

could be more opposed to his sweet teachings than the dismal, mutilated Christianity of Port-Royal. And could any thing be more unlike what he expected of his nuns, than the hideous description given of the most famous recluses of that sect, by their own Bishop, in one fierce phrase: "Pure as angels and proud as devils."

Wherever Jansenism gained admittance to any extent, it did not ultimately triumph. Occasionally we find a spirited woman like Marie Constance, who governs her Bishop and his diocese without stepping beyond her parlor. She introduces the grim discipline of Port-Royal, and the poor Sisters who refuse "to submit their judgment" are sternly dealt with. But why did the Sisters elect her? Because the Bishop whom she "governed," being a Jansenist himself, would have no Sister in office but one that "suited him." Henri Arnauld and Marie Constance carried their point, the rules were infringed on, both enjoyed no doubt their "little brief authority." But God righted all in His own time, and when the Church suspended Arnauld, and the strong arm of Louis XIV. deposed Marie Constance, the true daughters of St. Francis, forgetting their past sufferings, gazed more in sorrow than in anger over the fallen pillars of a great edifice.

Other defections* were still more notorious, but in every case public scandal was not unfollowed by public

* Indeed, it is hardly wonderful that a few simple Religious should be led astray by a heresy that presented itself under false colors, and that had duped men like Pascal, and women like Madame de Sevigné, who was granddaughter to St. Jane Frances herself.

reparation; and if these were faults that did not concern the Faith, if they were unaccompanied by rebellion against the Sovereign Pontiff himself, we should almost be inclined to designate them "happy sins," so beautifully did they call forth the charity and affection of all true Visitandines. Does heresy or relaxation of discipline gain access to any of their houses? There are no supercilious criticisms of the erring; no self-glorious gratulations, no pharisaical thanking of the Lord, no invidious comparisons between the upright and the prostrate—no one comes forward with knife and caustic, no one seeks to shake off the fallen as an unclean thing, no one points with the finger of scorn at those who err, whether in faith or discipline. The conduct of the faithful majority is exactly the reverse of that deplored by a spiritual writer, who says, that when a poor human being falls, there are ten hands extended to push him lower, or at least to keep him down; while if an ox or an ass falls, men run in scores to the rescue. The amiable daughters of St. Francis are quick to discern evil, but harshness or unkindness can never direct their pens; they weep over their erring Sisters, they conjure them with loving earnestness, they pray unceasingly for them: their charity beareth all things, hopeth all things,—sooner or later it must be victorious.

The only mementoes that remain of these glorious women, their letters, this affectionate throwing of themselves on paper, bear witness that the sweet spirit of St. Francis still brooded dovelike over his true children.

Indeed, it is remarkable that, among so many quotations in this work from the dusty archives of centuries, not a harsh word, not an unkind phrase is to be found, not a line which might not have come from the gentle Founder himself.

But Rev. Father Daniel has not by any means confined himself to the cloister. His work is replete with beautiful episodes of the most distinguished people of the age. He introduces us at the courts of kings, but he shows us nothing unfit for the presence of the King of kings.* Here he gives us a glimpse of that paragon of wisdom, Madame de Maintenon, the queen of France, though the widow of Scarron durst not assume the crown which the most despotic of monarchs would gladly bestow. Again, he re-echoes the thunders of Bourdaloue and Bossuet; and, if he stoops to grapple with the blasphemous ribaldry of the wits, or the gloomy theology of the schismatical doctors, he "stoops to conquer." Perhaps one of his most affecting episodes is that of the gifted and saintly Colombière, at once the teacher and the disciple of Margaret Mary.

Our author has succeeded in giving his work all the interest of a romance, and more. He has made a noble addition to the very small stock of pious books which are edifying to all, without being tedious to any. What he has done for the Visitation Order, a Religious of the

* Father Daniel certainly gives us a glimpse of Madame de la Vallière, but it is only as retiring a second time among the Visitandines at Chaillot, or receding forever behind the *grille* of the Carmelites.

convent of Kenmare has done, though not, perhaps, so attractively, for the first and second Franciscan Orders. Hers was a task requiring much patient research, a respectable knowledge of languages, and perhaps that peculiar form of piety most congenial to a highly poetic temperament: her works prove that she possesses these qualifications in no ordinary degree. She has discarded the heavy style which makes pious histories all but intolerable to those who most need the stimulus of holy example, whether to draw them from wrong paths or keep them in right ones.*

* As a specimen of this lady's style, we give the opening paragraphs of her Life of St. Clare:

"The ruins of the old castle of Sasso Rosso, where our saint was born, may still be seen in the immediate neighborhood of Assisi. There, also, in the monastery of Poor Clares, are preserved the mortal remains of the Lady Clare de Scefi, once the heiress and hope of her illustrious house. That which is material is perishing with time; while century after century the immaterial, the spiritual, increases and vivifies with a vitality proportioned to the love and earnestness of the great and noble souls that gave it birth.

"Had the counts of Scefi given monarchs to the throne, victorious generals to the camp, or gifted statesmen to the senate, time might have thrown its shadow over the lustre of their fame, or through failure of heirs, their noble line might have become extinct; but now, the lapse of ages cannot lessen the glory of that illustrious house, for in eternity alone will it be worthily exalted: nor can its lineage fail, for the promise of God to Francis, that his children should never perish from the earth, is continually more and more verified. And yet, when Ortolana wandered prayerful and sad in a foreign land, when Clare fled at night from her father's house to renounce all that seemed imperishable, and embrace all that seemed dreary and visionary, who would have dared to predict that, in centuries to come, her name would be revered, her birthplace renowned, her parents ennobled through their child, her children treasured by the Church among her choicest

Our author's history of devotion to the Sacred Heart is complete enough as regards Continental Europe, but he does not even mention that land which, in a Catholic point of view, stands at the head of English speaking countries. When or how the devotion came into Ireland will probably never be known. Father de la Colombière had preached it in London before a voice was raised in its favor in France. After his banishment, "it lay hid," as a learned Oratorian* thinks, "in England, and did secret work in quiet places and in humble souls." If this be so, its transition to Ireland was very easy, and it is almost certain that its origin dates nearly as far back, for our grandfathers coupled it with devotion to Mary, though perhaps neither they nor the generation that preceded them could tell the story of its introduction. One thing is certain: it never evoked the smallest opposition: as in Ireland the blood of the martyrs was *not* the seed of the Christians, for the Church of that country was a thousand years old before it could boast a martyr; so the dear devotion to the Sacred Heart was not grafted on her liturgy with the knife of persecution. Whether it stole in furtively as in penal times, or was boldly preached when more peaceful days arrived, it never had an opponent among clergy or people, no dissentient voice was

jewels, and honored by the faithful, however personally unworthy of such honor, because they bear the name and observe the rule of Clare?"

* Rev. J. B. Dalgairns. He says, too, that Right Rev. Dr. Milner possessed in his private chapel at Oscott the first altar ever erected to the Sacred Heart in England.

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heard amid the acclamations with which it was lovingly received by a faithful generation.

Blessed Margaret Mary said that the Visitandines and the Jesuits would be the chief agents in its propagation, but there never was a Visitation convent in Ireland, and the devotion was rooted in the land before the Jesuits had a permanent establishment there. The sons of St. Ignatius did not, however, neglect Ireland, a country, too, which was largely represented in their illustrious Society.* The annals of the Irish Poor Clares mention a Father Murphy, S. J., "a Religious of most saintly life," who gave them a retreat in 1743, and was for several years their confessor and friend. They then resided in a gloomy court in North King Street, and as they wore secular dress, they were allowed, after having frequently appeared in court, to remain at large; the judges kindly giving them the benefit of their doubts as to whether they were Religious. Father Murphy ministered to their spiritual wants at the risk of his life; indeed, it was at the same risk that he set his foot in his native land as a priest, and especially as a Jesuit.

Doubtless this good Father preached the devotion to the Sacred Heart in season, though probably not out of season, since his great prudence enabled him to lead an apostolic life in the face of the penal code, and he died a natural, though a premature death. Meanwhile another

* It will be remembered that the first Jesuits that ever visited Ireland, Salmeron and Brouet, were sent thither by St. Ignatius himself. They carried letters of introduction from James V. of Scotland, whom they visited *en route*, to the Ulster princes.

Irish Jesuit, Father Doran, uncle to Dr. Moylan, afterward Bishop of Cork, was preparing a somewhat strange apostle of the devotion for his native land. Young, beautiful, brilliant, and fascinating, Nano Nagle certainly was, but her energy, her fortitude, her perseverance, were yet untried; she had but just been converted from a life of worldliness. At that very time the Executive was offering large rewards for the apprehension of a bishop or priest, and still larger for those who harbored such. But this was little to Nano, since she was neither bishop nor priest, though within the frail girl there glowed the soul of an apostle. To form some idea of the people she was destined to evangelize, a people maddened by ceaseless oppression and ignorant of what the name Catholic implied, though they would gladly die for it, one need only read the following description of scenes enacted, some within sight of her residence, the others in the very districts in which she then taught school:—

"March 8, 1768. One of the sentinels at South Gate was knocked down by three desperadoes, who, were it not for the noise of passengers approaching, would have thrown him over the bridge. The evening of the same day was concluded, to use the words of the newspaper, in a most pious and devout manner, by the warlike sons and daughters of Fair-Lane and Blackpool, who met in a long field near Fair-Hill, and fought with one another till night came on. The women were armed very plentifully with stones; and the men, according to Cherokee custom, with tomahawks of a new construction, which

were about four feet long, and so dextrously contrived (having a hook and spear at the end) that any who missed grappling were sure to stab with the sharp point."*

How must Miss Nagle have felt when she encountered men and women like these?

The magistrates regarded the daily and nightly riots with passive indifference; the warlike feats of the stalwart Amazons were a good joke in their eyes, though these poor women were wives and mothers. Miss Nagle's benevolent efforts, however, were discussed at the Mansion House† as being dangerous to the Protestant succession! for, no matter how deep the libations of the Corporation might be, they never forgot that the Stuart race was not yet extinct.

No doubt, it was only in firm reliance on the Heart of Jesus that our young apostle could face the physical labor of her mission, to say nothing of its more repulsive features. Her daily routine was this:—She rose, no one knew when, she spent four hours at her devotions;‡ at eight she repaired to her schools, at five she left them for the garrets and cellars of the sick. Touched with

* Quoted by Rev. D. Murphy, from a Diary written at the time.—*Memoir of N. Nagle.* Dublin Review.

† Now the *Mercy Hospital.* It is a fine old building, on the south side of the Lee.

‡ From the time of her conversion, 1748, till her death, 1784, Miss Nagle used to spend the whole of every Maunday-Thursday night kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament. Probably she adopted this pious practice from Blessed Margaret Mary, whose *Life*, by Bishop Languet, she must have read in France.

Christ's own thirst for souls, she looked unawed upon scenes that naturally should have made her maiden's heart sink within her. Yet more, her herculean labors are so delightful to her that she fears lest she is not treading the royal road of the cross, the surest and safest path to heaven. What exquisite touches of self-devotion, of generosity, of firm reliance on God, of considerateness for others, of burning zeal, are found in the following letter written by Miss Nagle, several years after the establishment of her schools, to a lady, Angela Fitzsimmons, who afterwards became her disciple:—

"I am sorry you cannot see the schools, as I think no one can have an idea of their use except an eye-witness. As you wish to have a particular account of them, I will tell you how I began. I kept my design a profound secret, for otherwise I should have met opposition on every side, particularly from my own immediate family, as, to all appearance, they would have suffered from it. My confessor was the only person I told; and, as I could not appear in the affair, I sent my maid to get a good mistress, and to take in thirty poor girls. When the little school was settled, I used to steal in there every morning. My brother thought I was at the chapel. This passed on very well, until one day a poor man came to him to beg of him to speak to me to take his child into my school; upon which he came to his wife and myself, laughing at the conceit of a man who was mad, and thought I was a school-mistress. Then I owned that I had set up a school, upon which he fell into a violent passion, and said a vast

deal about the bad consequences that might follow. His wife is very zealous, so is he; but worldly interest blinded him at first. He was soon reconciled to it. He was not the person I dreaded most would be brought into trouble by it; it was my uncle Nagle, who is, I think, more disliked by Protestants than any Catholic in the kingdom. The best part of the fortune I have I received from him. When he heard it, he was not at all angry, and in a little time they were so good as to contribute largely to its support. I took in children by degrees, not to make any noise about it in the beginning. In nine months, I had about two hundred. When the Catholics saw what service it did, they begged that I would set up schools in the other end of the town, with which request I readily complied. From the time of my uncle's death, I supported all the children at my own expense. I got a master, and took in forty boys, who, when they learn the Douay catechism by heart, are taught to write and cipher. There are three schools where the girls learn to read, and when they have the catechism by heart, they learn to work. I prepare a set for first Communion twice a year, and I may truly say it is the only thing that gives me any trouble. In the first place, I believe myself very incapable; and, in the beginning, being obliged to speak for upwards of four hours, and my chest not being as strong as it had been, I spat blood, which I took care to conceal, for fear of being prevented from instructing the poor. When I have done preparing them at each end of the town, I feel myself like an idler that has nothing to

do, though I speak almost as much as when preparing them. I find not the least difficulty. I explain the catechism every day in one school or another, as well as I can; and if all people thought as little of labor as I do, they would have little merit. I often think my schools will never bring me to heaven, as I take only delight and pleasure in them. You see it has pleased Almighty God to make me succeed, when I had every thing to fight against. I assure you I did not expect a farthing from any mortal toward the support of my schools; and I thought I should not have more than fifty or sixty girls, until I got my fortune. I began in a poor, humble manner; and though it pleased the Divine will to give me severe trials in this foundation, yet this was to show that it is His work, and has not been effected by human means. My views are not for one object alone; if I could be of any service in saving souls in any part of the world, I would do all in my power."

What a commentary on the words, "The lover flies, runs, and rejoices; he is not dismayed by difficulties, because he conceives that he may and can do all things. And therefore he accomplishes many things where he, that loves not, faints and lies down." But in order that her heroism may be still better appreciated, it must not be forgotten that the above letter, and the dismal extract previously quoted from a diary, were written the same year, 1768.

The great devotion to the Sacred Heart that prevails in the Presentation Houses of Ireland might, we think,

be traced back to the days of their Foundress. Indeed, if we may rely on a memory generally accurate, we have heard some of her children assert as much. This much we know for certain, that of fifty houses of the Presentation Order there is not one without its confraternity of the Sacred Heart.

And yet the Church in Ireland saw but little peace in Nano Nagle's day. Catholics, of course, never dreamt of opposing her favorite devotion, and if we may believe Protestant testimony of Protestant divines, there was hardly an "Establishment" man in Ireland* that could grapple theologically with what was then a question. So, it continued as before, it was the Catholic religion, not one of its peculiar devotions, that was a sign to be contradicted. During her life, hardly a day elapsed that did not bring to her heart-rending intelligence, to say nothing of the sad state of the poor people among whom she labored, and who were in many instances hardly superior to savages. How must she have felt when she heard of the murder of that zealous, eloquent, and holy priest, Father Nicholas Sheehy, who was hunted to death by a faction over whom Titus Oates ought to have pre-

* If we may judge by Dean Swift's reports, theology among the Establishment Hierarchy was at a low ebb, to say nothing of faith:—

"Of whom there are not four at most
Who know there is a Holy Ghost;
And when they boast they have conferred it,
Like Paul's Ephesians, never heard it;
And when they gave it, 'tis well known,
They gave what never was their own."

sided.* A "relief" bill was indeed passed soon after, but some of its earliest effects were the Gordon riots, which threatened to *burn* her religion out of the land. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodists, seems to have been Lord George's theologian, for he exhorted all

* Father Sheehy's execution took place in the pleasant little town of Clonmel. The spike, over a gateway, on which his noble head withered for years, is still pointed out by the inhabitants, who are often seen to kneel before it, as on holy ground. Despite the fashionable names since decreed the locality, as Prior Park, &c., the people persist in calling it *Gallows Hill.* The remains of the martyr lie beneath the shadow of a ruined church some miles distant, in an old, picturesque churchyard. It is no easy matter to keep his coffin covered, as pilgrims come from all parts to gather a handful of "the blessed earth." The grief and horror this tragedy inspired in the people have been transmitted though not recorded. When any of their poorer descendants visit the neighboring towns, as Waterford, the very fishwomen no sooner learn that they hail from Clonmel, than they devoutly cross themselves, and with an involuntary shudder exclaim:—"May God protect us! The town where the priest was hanged!" Persecution was rife in that town long after comparative quiet had been restored elsewhere. Outrages were daily perpetrated, which a high-spirited people could not brook, yet resistance was totally useless. There are persons still living who remember to see one of the most respectable of the townspeople ignominiously flogged through the streets by a savage soldiery, for the crime of having a French letter on his person; for it is true that French was Sanscrit to the high handed rulers of Tipperary, who translated whatever they did not understand into treason. This gentleman, Mr. Wright, never recovered this treatment. He was father to the late John B. Wright, Esq., one of the most amiable of literary men, who was regarded as a prodigy of learning in the south, and was, besides, as great a character as Scott ever delineated. Several beautifully written works, chiefly lectures, are monuments of his great ability and profound research. Of independent fortune, he devoted himself, from his youth, to study. His wife and several of his children still survive.

zealous people to aid the young nobleman, who was "*fainting for the ark of Israel*," and proclaimed "that Roman Catholics ought not to be tolerated by any Government, Protestant, Mahometan, or pagan." Miss Nagle's friend, Dr. Coppinger, afterward Bishop of Cloyne, became involved in the controversy, and if his logic ultimately triumphed, he did not defend the good cause without great personal risks. These events, which occurred after the introduction of the Ursulines and the foundation of the Presentation nuns, added to Miss Nagle's solicitude for the noble women she had attracted to the religious life, and her severe labors pressed heavily on her catholic heart, yet no dangers could induce her to relax in her endeavors to procure God's greater glory. One letter of hers shows how fully her mind is with the Church on the subject of Jansenism, a sect then beginning to die out: having sent a young lady to France to be educated for the Cork foundation, she discovers, by some means or other, that there is a Jansenist Religious in the same convent with her protegée. She at once commissions a confidential friend to rectify the mistake, adding, "You may be confident, that had I known that the Fille St. Joseph was a Jansenist, I never should have sent her (the young lady) there."

Such are a few items in the life of her who, perhaps, did more than any other person to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart in Ireland. And of this woman, whose daily deeds of heroism would fill many a volume, but little record remains. Bishop Coppinger condensed her

life into a panegyric,* the present Dean of Cork into an article for the Dublin Review, subsequently published in a pamphlet, the Christian Brothers into a lesson in one of their Class Books. The city which was the scene of her labors has been sufficiently prolific of men of genius, but, except the above, no notice of this great woman came from their pens. Father O'Leary must have often met her in his rambles, and though it is impossible that he should not have revered her, he has not left us on this subject any of his inimitable pages. He was kept busy, however, teaching Wesley the proper use of fagots, which, says he, "ought to be confined to the kitchen, since they have no commission from Christ to preach the Gospel." Doctor Butler knew her well; but though he could appreciate an earl's coronet, his mind was too narrow to value rightly one of the most beautiful characters the world ever saw. His pious successor, Dr. Moylan, so assiduously applied himself to the apostolic functions of his calling that, according to Miss Nagle's own testimony, "he had hardly time to eat his meals." The erudite author of that interesting work, entitled, the *Cork Pulpit*,† has never sought to immortalize with his graceful pen the valiant woman who did the work of an apostle when Cork had no Catholic pulpit, the woman, too, from whom not a few of the ornaments‡ of the Cork

* This panegyric, one of Bishop Coppinger's last efforts, was delivered in the chapel of the South Presentation Convent, Cork. It was afterward published in a pamphlet.

† Ven. Archdeacon O'Shea, St. Patrick's, Cork.

‡ The following passage from a letter of Miss Nagle's (1770) shows that she made catechists and even missionaries of "her boys":—

Pulpit imbibed the first rudiments of the doctrines they so eloquently expounded, and in whom they had seen the first practical illustrations of the meekness and humility of the Heart of Jesus. The eccentric Father Francis Mahony did not consecrate to her any of his brilliant "papers," though he could not have been unacquainted with the circumstances of her life, for one of his earliest appointments was that of chaplain to the North Presentation Convent,* founded in the classic region of Black-

"I am sending boys to the West Indies. These boys being well instructed, and the true religion decaying very much there, by reason of those that leave this country knowing nothing of their religion, caused this scheme to be laid, which I hope may have the desired effect. All my children are brought up to be fond of instructing, as I think it lies in the power of the poor to be of more service in that way than the rich. These boys promise me that they will take great pains with the little blacks. I will have pictures for them to give the negroes that learn the catechism."

* The North Presentation Convent, founded about eighty years ago, is a fine, spacious building, and though its situation does not appear very salubrious, it is quite remarkable for the longevity of its inmates, among whom there are always several jubilarians. Their pupils exceed eight hundred, all of the poorest classes. At a time when every one was praising "Father Prout," and those who loved him best were sighing over him, we happened to ask one of the elder nuns whether she remembered him, and received, as nearly as we can recall, the following reminiscences:—

"As chaplain he was exceedingly kind and accommodating, but when he was to officiate we could never leave the choir before Mass in the morning. He came into the chapel very softly, and though the sacristan rang the Mass bell the moment he made his appearance, he vested so quickly and read the Collects and Epistle so rapidly, that if a Sister happened to be at the cemetery (about a hundred feet off) when the bell rang, she found him at the Gospel by the time she reached the choir. He was very droll. The Sister whose turn it might be to entertain him at breakfast had not much to do."

pool, beneath the shadow of Shandon spire; but the author of the "Prout Papers" found other themes more congenial to his inimitable pen, and *The bells of Shandon* will ring out in his quaint but glorious rhymes while the English language survives. Gerald Griffin, indeed, when he taught the grandchildren of her pupils on the very spot where their ancestors used to hold their weekly pitched battles, wrote a beautiful poem in honor of her whose work he continued. He calls her, *Star of the Lowly, Apostle of Light, Sweet Violet of Sanctity,** &c., and, perhaps, but for his premature death, he might have given us her history. But if the name of Nano Nagle is still revered, if her tomb† is visited as a shrine, if the

The nuns were greatly surprised when they learned that he had turned author. He was then at Watergrass Hill. They always spoke of him with gratitude and affection. Perhaps the edifying close of his very singular career is due to their unceasing prayers. His remains, we believe, have been "brought home" from Paris to the city of his dearest affections—that city, of which, as he tells us, he continually "grew fonder."

* In his poem:

> "'Twas the garden of Christendom, tended with care,
> Every flow'ret of Eden grew peacefully there," &c.

† Nano Nagle's tomb is in the cemetery of the South Presentation Convent, Douglass Street, Cork. This convent, now nearly a hundred years old, was built by her for the Ursulines, who continued to occupy it till their removal to their beautiful convent at Blackrock, in 1822. Besides poor schools for nearly two thousand children, the South Presentation contains an asylum for destitute old women, endowed by Miss Nagle, who contemplated also a Magdalen asylum, of which her premature death hindered the establishment. The convent is very large, but so contrived that its appearance from the street is not by any means imposing, Miss Nagle being anxious to conceal its real nature from the public, which she effectually did. The chapel is

poor room in which she breathed her last is, if we mistake not, an oratory of the Sacred Heart, if a light perpetually burns over the spot from which her precious soul winged its flight heavenward, if her poor garments, from which poverty itself might take a lesson, are reverently shown—certainly, none of this is due to the efforts her distinguished country-people have made to rescue so holy a memory from oblivion. The poor people among whom she came as a merciful apparition, bringing glad tidings of great joy, for centuries unheard of—they have handed down her deeds in their simple traditions, nor need her children seek elsewhere the holiest, the humblest, and sublimest teachings their state requires.

Several special indulgences, &c., were early granted to the devotion to the Sacred Heart in Ireland, in consequence, as one of the rescripts says, "of the great devo-

small, but very handsome; the gardens are beautifully laid out. During the coldest days of winter, exotics from the greenhouse give out their fragrance before the altar. From the upper terraces may be seen one of the most lovely views in the world, sweeping from the romantic cottages that crown the gentler elevations of "Sunday's Well," and look into the "smiling waters of the Lee," to the more elegant villas that combine with nature to render Glanmire a fairyland of beauty. The convent cemetery is a beautiful, lovely spot, the singularly bright verdure of which is most refreshing to the eye. Nano Nagle, the first of the heroic band whom death struck down, sleeps among the loved companions of toils: a heavy-looking, box-shaped tomb entirely covers her grave, on which are engraved her name, age, and a few other particulars, besides the usual petition for eternal peace. It is sad to think that no copious memoirs of this great woman have been collected. Her kinsman, Father Mathew, has fared better, though he hardly accomplished as much, and certainly not with as much risk.

tion to the Sacred Heart that prevails in that kingdom." The extent to which this devotion is practised there may be gathered from the fact that even in places where High Mass was unknown, and vespers* regarded as a superfluity, the first Friday of every month has been kept from time immemorial with benediction, acts of consecration, reparation, &c.†

But when the days of persecution were almost over, and when Nano Nagle's children, originally founded, as the apostolic brief that approved her institution shows,

* High Mass and vespers, being services that involve music, could not be attempted during the persecution, so that the people got out of the *habit* of expecting them.

† The church around which our earliest and fondest memories cling was an old building without the slightest pretensions to architectural beauty. It rose within a few feet of the Suir, was surrounded by shade-trees, and commanded a beautiful view of hill and dale, pasture and moorland. Even on Christmas Day or Easter Sunday, High Mass was never celebrated there. The vesper service was introduced, but seldom attracted more than the performers. Yet the first Friday of every month was most religiously celebrated. The touching acts of reparation, &c., were recited by the white-haired priest, in a tone that often affected his simple auditors to tears. Benediction closed the devotions. "The old chapel," so beautifully situated *vis-à-vis* with the loveliest islets of the clear Suir, had been constructed without the least regard to the comforts of the worshippers; its floor was the bare ground, not even paved; its unwieldy galleries afforded a sort of accommodation, acceptable only to such as have a penitential spirit. In fact, it was a sort of link between the times of persecution and those of peace. We have since knelt beneath the fretted arches of historic cathedrals, but not with a greater sentiment of reverential awe than we felt at the devotions to the Sacred Heart, performed at twilight or later, in the "old chapel," to which we were regularly carried or led from our fourth or fifth year. No vestige of "the old chapel" now remains; the trees that almost hid it have been cut down to make room for the present spacious edifice.

for visiting the sick as well as teaching the poor, became cloistered, God raised up another apostle to carry this devotion with devotion to Mary into the hospitals, the prisons, the hovels of the poor. In meekness and humility, there never was a truer daughter of the Heart of Jesus than Catharine McAuley, and never, perhaps, was any woman more consumed with burning zeal for the glory of that Heart. She practised the devotion from her girlhood, she spread it wherever she had influence, and though among her early companions there has been no indefatigable annalist to chronicle her deeds, her work still lives. No confessor ever bade her write in detail the events, the works of her life; and though we can hardly help regretting this, yet we must acknowledge that we think them right in not requiring of her a work, to accomplish which she should turn aside for a while from the death-bed of the sinner, or omit to feed the poor, who came to her for the instruction of their souls and the food of their bodies. It was very different with Madeleine de Chaugy. When she would take her pen, she had only to lay aside her needle or spinning-wheel; and perhaps, if St. Francis had not been persuaded to change his first design of having his nuns uncloistered, that they might minister to the sick, his early daughters had not found time to leave us such copious records. It is not a little curious that our present apostle of the devotion should be the very person who carried out the original intention of St. Francis de Sales in founding the Visitation, and of Nano Nagle in the Presentation Sisters, and

who, unlike them, has taken every possible precaution to make this permanent. In the meagre annals of the early days of the Order of Mercy, the Feast of the Sacred Heart is mentioned as having been celebrated with all possible pomp and devotion; the confraternity of the Sacred Heart* was the first sodality established in the Institute; the children were enrolled in it the day of their first communion. The devotion even travelled into the Rule, all the servants, orphans, &c., in every house being obliged to communicate on the first Friday of every month, if permitted by their confessor. And as if all this were not enough, the following beautiful passage makes it obligatory on the Sisters as a special devotion:

"They shall possess a most tender devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, fount of every grace and object of our most ardent love; and, concurring with the pious wishes of the Catholic Church, they shall raise their thoughts and affections to that boundless love which our Divine Redeemer has shown for mankind in the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, and in His dolorous Passion and death suffered for our redemption, and which He daily evinces to us by the treasures of grace, and the immense benefits which flow from His loving and amiable Heart. They shall, on their part, endeavor to

* In all the more ancient prayer-books in Ireland, the acts of reparation, consecration, &c., are given with the heading:—"To be recited publicly in Catholic churches on the first Friday of each month," &c. On these occasions, the prayer: Fac nos, Domine Jesu, Sanctissimi Cordis virtutibus indui, &c., is chanted immediately after the prayer: Deus qui nobis sub sacramente mirabili, &c. The Mass of the Sacred Heart was in the supplement of all the older Missals.

make reparation for the outrages He has suffered, and for which the malice and ingratitude of man make so base a return."*

And these rules are well kept in both hemispheres. Almost every Convent of Mercy is the seat of a confraternity of the Sacred Heart. The first Friday of each successive month is a day of special devotion. Oratories of the Sacred Heart abound everywhere; and the heart-shaped medals, suspended by red ribbons and worn at all feasts and processions, indicate the best girls in every school—the children of the Sacred Heart.

A perpetual novena to the Sacred Heart is going on in the Institute; no sooner has one house finished it than another takes it up, and during its continuance a lamp burns before the picture of the Sacred Heart. In the interminable plains of Australia, on the beautiful coasts of Tasmania, amid the wild scenery of Clonakilty, and among the close streets of Ulster, Convents of Mercy are erected under the title of the "Most Sacred Heart." And if on any Friday of the year, especially on a "first Friday," you should stand near the shores of the island-

* Possederanno ancora una tenerissima divozione al Sacro Cuor di Gesù fonte di ogni grazia, e oggetto tenerissimo del nostro amore, e corrispondendo ai pii desiderj della Chiesa cattolica, solleveranno le loro menti e i loro affetti a quell'amore immenso che il nostro Divin Redentore ha dimostrato ull'uman genere nella instituzione della Eucaristia e nella sua dolorosa passione, e morte sofferta per la nostra Redenzione, e che tutto dè ci viene dimostrando coi tesori de grazie e coly'immensi beneficj, che scorrono dal suo amante, ed amabil Cuore. Cercheranno da parte loro di fare riparazione per gli oltraggi da lui sofferti, ai quali la malizia ed ingratitudine dell'uomo corrispondono si malamente.—Capo xii., S. iii.

studded Bay of Bantry, to gaze on a panorama of bold and sublime scenery hardly equalled in the world, or strive to catch a glimpse of the lordly "Reeks," which ever and anon show their huge proportions through the murky clouds that veil them, your attention may perhaps be arrested by another sight: toward three in the afternoon you hear the silvery tinkling of the bells of the beautiful gothic convent that looks out on the bay; this call is not answered by Sisters of Mercy alone; the inmates of the cabins rush forth, the fishwomen lay down their scaly burdens, the girls pause in their search for cockles and periwinkles; let your eye range unchecked along the graceful and picturesque coast, or follow the bold outlines of the bleak hills and mountain ranges—in whatever direction you turn you see men, women and children fall on their knees and reverently bend their heads in prayer: they are all members of the confraternities of the Sacred Heart and the Precious Blood; their occupations will not allow them leisure to repair to the convent chapel, where the Sisters and their pupils and orphans are assembled before the Blessed Sacrament; so they come out of their houses or up from the beach, and turning toward the convent chapel, worship the agonizing Heart of Him who reposes there, and pray, but with a far different intention from that of the Jews: *His Blood be upon us and upon our children.*

But not only Convents of Mercy—every convent in Ireland is a focus of devotion to the Sacred Heart; each has its oratories and confraternities, each is as zealous to

propagate it as if all were bound to this by rule, as the Sisters of Mercy are.* Almost every parish has its confraternity, to some the Apostleship of Prayer has been united—to all the Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary or some similar society is attached, for the Irish can never separate Jesus from Mary; they must have, not the Son alone nor the Mother alone, but the Son and the Mother, Jesus and Mary. And indeed with regard to this devotion, how could they be separated? Is not the source of the life-blood of the Heart of Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary? And the human nature before which every creature must bow, hypostatically united as it is to the divinity, did it not once belong to Mary, and did not Jesus condescend to receive it of her?

* This is the more easy, as every convent in Ireland is engaged in the work of education. Even the Carmelites and Poor Clares, properly contemplative Orders, have been obliged to this by the Holy See, since their fixed settlement in the country, 1804. By a brief of Pope Pius VII., they were dispensed from saying the divine office, and directed to say in its stead the little office of the Blessed Virgin, and most of their fasts and austerities of rule were, by the same brief, "commuted," says Very Rev. Dean Murphy, "into the equally laborious and more practically useful obligation of works of charity to the poor." The principal establishments in Ireland, in the order of their restoration or foundation, are: Dominican Nuns, 6 houses; Poor Clares, 5; Carmelites, 8; Ursulines, 4; Presentation Convents, 48; Bridgetines, 2; Sisters of Charity, 7; Loretto Convents, 7; Convents of Mercy, 84; Convents of the Sacred Heart, 3. It will be seen that institutes which have no superior-general, and are specially devoted to the poor, as the Presentation and Mercy Convents, are by far the most widely spread. Strictly contemplative houses there are none; the reformed Trappists have their schools, free and select few; the mitigated Carmelites conduct boarding and day schools, even the reformed or Teresian Carmelites (Warrenmount) have their poor-schools.

And this country, rewarded by the Sovereign Pontiff himself for its special devotion to the Heart of Jesus, is not mentioned by Father Daniel; why is this? Perhaps he was not aware of the enthusiasm with which the people received it, cherishing it in days of persecution, and glorying in it in times of peace. It may be so, and yet the story should not remain untold. No doubt, materials could be found for a regular history of the devotion in Ireland, by such as have time and opportunity of seeking them; and such a history would be a beautiful thank-offering to lay at the feet of our Lady of the Sacred Heart, who so benignly prepared our forefathers to receive with gratitude and delight the Divine Heart of her Son; who infused into their souls, at a time when there was not a line on the subject printed in their language, the sublime science which made them as it were instinctively seize the whole theology of the question, while the learned doctors of Pistoia were scandalized at the idea of worshipping a Heart of Flesh, though that Heart belonged to the *Word made flesh* for man's salvation. And who shall tell what the effects of that devotion have been? Is not its peculiar spirit of meekness and humility spread everywhere? What else transforms young fair girls into the valiant women that are a puzzle to those who are not of the household of the faith?* Was ever

* "It has been remarked that, while, in the Crimea, our hired nurses disgraced themselves through incompetency and disobedience, and many of our volunteer ladies were obliged to return home ill or worn-out, the Sisters of Mercy held on with unflagging spirit and energy—never surprised, never put out, ready in resource, meeting all difficul-

king potent enough to accomplish what weak women have done almost without a conscious effort, so great was their love? Look at Catharine McAuley's mission, for instance. She was sent forth to gather around her, by thousands; the gifted, the beautiful, the wealthy;—for what purpose? To minister to the poor, the sick, and the erring. For what guerdon? The bare possibility of winning disciples to the Heart of Jesus. What had they to leave for this purpose? Every thing that makes what is called life. What were they to get in return? Nothing, so far as this world is concerned. God gave her the mission—how did He insure her success? By giving her, too, a more than ordinary share in the virtues of the Heart of His Son. What is the result? Why, that her very look inspires vocations; disciples flock to

ties with a cheerful spirit, a superiority owing to their previous training and experience. . . . . At home they undertake the charge of orphan and destitute children, and bring up the girls for service—they take care of the aged and crippled, distribute medicines, train criminal and vagrant children, &c. All these duties require for their wise fulfilment something more than love and patience. They require energy, foresight, economy, the habit of working in concert, and subordination. Accordingly, we find the women who are to fulfil them, subjected to a severe and methodical training. And we must do the same if we would have women successfully employed in works of benevolence and social economy."—*North British Review*, Feb., 1862.

And does the *British Review* hold up the discipline of convents as a model for the enlightened English people? Is Saul, indeed, among the prophets, whereas his mission is only to look for his father's asses? Ah, but he is very short-sighted for a seer—he cannot look beyond the kernel. Along with Mother McAuley's discipline he must have her spirit, the spirit of the Heart of Jesus, otherwise all the discipline of the Prussian army would not avail.

her from all parts; fathers and mothers, strong in the faith, joyously present her their only children; little girls visit her, and they hold fast by the altar step, unwilling to be carried away: "We will remain novices till we are of age," say they, "but we will never quit this holy house." Could the united efforts of all the monarchs on earth enkindle in human hearts enthusiasm like to this? Ah! certainly not. Only the Heart of Jesus could do it. Outside the Church the discipline Mother McAuley established may be imitated, but the moral results will be no better than before. "The severe and methodical training" may be given, if, indeed, ladies are to be found that will submit to it, and that solely for the love of God, but the rest must come from the Heart of Jesus; it is not in human nature to accomplish it alone. All the heroism which Protestants will ever seek in vain to emulate comes from the fire that Jesus Christ came on earth to kindle, as Catharine McAuley used to say; the focus of that fire is the Sacred Heart, whether received in the Holy Communion or worshipped in the tabernacle. Take away the real presence, and in one week the Church would have no religious communities. Bestow in lieu of the Blessed Sacrament every gift of talent, ability, wealth, power—add, if you choose, "severe, methodical training," yet the united efforts of the human race could not establish one permanent monastic institution. Ah, truly, well does Ireland deserve to be ever represented by a burning lamp at the shrine of the first apostle of that Heart which Ireland is

so well repaid for worshipping. And the daughters of Ireland, who fearlessly carried that devotion everywhere, from the castle to the cabin, who taught it at the risk of their lives, who, for sake of it, despised their beauty, forgot their youth, cast away their wealth, refused to exercise their talents but for its honor—they have not indeed been raised as yet upon our altars, but are they not hidden in the sweetest recesses of that Heart which was their refuge in life and their hope in death? And we, who have the privilege of being united to them by ties of blood, or by the still more honorable ties of a common faith, when we look up toward their eternal home and see them secure "in the holes of the rock and the hollow places of the wall," shall we not salute every one of them as the poets of the middle ages saluted our common Mother: "*O Lady, our Sarai, say that thou art our Sister that for thy sake the King may be merciful to us, and that our soul may live in consideration of thine!* For your sake will *God, our own God, bless us, and cause the light of His countenance to shine upon us, and have mercy on us. That we may know Thy way on earth, Thy salvation in all nations. For we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.* O Jesus, hide us in Thy Adorable Heart, that Heart pierced for our transgressions. No longer need we fear to *look upon Him whom we have pierced;* the most bitter pains of His Passion, *the wounds wherewith He was wounded in the house of His friends*, have become our sweetest refuge. O Mary, Lady, Mistress, and Queen of the Sacred Heart,

place us in that loving Heart which our sins have opened, and place us there so securely that we may never be able to leave it! O Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us! O Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!

CONVENT OF MERCY, St. Louis, Mo.,
Feast of the Dolors of Mary, 1867.

PREFACE.

It was, for Christendom, a great subject of rejoicing, when, in 1765, Pope Clement XIII., responding to the pious eagerness of clergy and laity, solemnly approved of the Devotion to the Most Adorable Heart of Jesus, and assigned it its place in the glorious liturgy, and in the offices of the Church of God.

More recently, His Holiness Pius IX. heightened this joy, by proclaiming *Blessed* the humble Virgin whom Our Lord used as His instrument to reveal to men the secrets of His Heart; and to-day, after a whole century of revolutions, which have left nothing standing, the festivities of 1865 echo those celebrated a hundred years since. Could any testimony be more sublimely eloquent of the inexhaustible fecundity and eternal youth of the Church?

A wonderful thing, truly, if well considered: among so many ruins and agitations, the memory of a poor Religious, far from perishing, is now more than ever held in benediction. If succeeding generations have forgotten the manners, the traditions, and even the names of their ancestors, they have not the less continued to revere *her* name; and we know, that in the fiercest frenzy of the Revolution, when the ashes of kings were scattered to the

winds, the virginal remains of Margaret Mary, gathered by pious hands, ceased not to be surrounded with homage and respect. Behold, then, the reality of the glory of the saints, the most enduring, the most popular of all glory, a glory which may well arouse the jealousy of the ambitious, and of those who run after the bubble of earthly renown, of human glory.

Though all the potent of earth, though all the wise and learned should unite to elevate one of themselves to this degree of honor, they assuredly could not compass it; they possess not the power which forces the knee to bend; never shall they draw from the heart or the lips of any one whatever, the least breathing of prayer. But this wonderful power, which no human society can claim, exists in the Catholic Church. The Vicar of Jesus Christ, a feeble, unarmed old man, speaks but a word, and at that word all prostrate themselves. He beatifies a humble virgin, born in an obscure village, who died in the odor of sanctity at the monastery of Paray-le-Monial, toward the end of the seventeenth century; and we all, after him, at once proclaim her blessed. Not only are her praises published, but her intercession is solemnly invoked, pilgrims from all quarters gather round her tomb, the Church hears, with transports of joy, this glorious news, which, borne to the ends of the earth, reanimates in all hearts faith, true devotion, and love of Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Doubtless, it has already been observed that, in his last Encyclical, Pius the Ninth exhorted the faithful to recur to

Our Lord, and eagerly to beseech His Most Sweet Heart to draw all to Him by the bonds of love. Evidently, the beatification of September 18th, and the Encyclical of December 8th, are the result of one and the same inspiration.

We will not, then, separate these two things; for the whole life of Margaret Mary is included in the mission Our Lord gave her to establish on earth the reign of His Divine Heart. By making known at once the servant of God and her work, the book we offer to the public will co-operate with the views of the pious Pontiff whom God has placed at the head of His Church to teach us the ways of salvation which lead to Him.

Of the book itself we shall speak but little. It will be seen so readily, that it is unnecessary for us to insist on it, that the sources upon which we have drawn are the most authentic; among these are the archives of Paray-le-Monial, and those of the bishopric of Autun.* May the use we have made of these rich materials not tend to deform the characteristics of the grand and pure physiognomy we have undertaken to reproduce in these pages.

Whatever may be the merit or demerit of this work,

* It is well known that Paray le-Monial is in the diocese of Autun. The worthy prelate of that ancient and venerable church has himself made us the most cordial and benevolent advances, and spared nothing to encourage a work calculated to tend to the glory of the Sacred Heart. As to the monastery of Paray-le-Monial, this book acquits us of a debt toward it, a dear and sacred promise which our Superiors kindly afforded us every facility of fulfilling.

throughout its pages will be heard the Blessed Margaret Mary herself, who is frequently quoted; then, too, will be heard the Divine Master, who communicated Himself so familiarly to this lover of His Heart. Happy are they who listen to His sweet voice, and submit themselves unreservedly to the power of His love!

It will be with this as with all the other teachings of Our Saviour Christ Jesus: treasures hidden from the proud of the world, but revealed to the humble. Hence we feel ourself urged, before commencing this recital, to place it wholly under the safeguard and protection of these divine words of the gospel; words which have issued from the mouth of the Incarnate Wisdom Himself:

"I give Thee thanks, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight."

"My Father hath given all things into My hands, and no one knoweth the Son but the Father: as no one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son hath willed to reveal Him."

"Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

"Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls:"

"For My yoke is sweet and My burden light."

HISTORY OF THE BLESSED MARGARET MARY.

CHAPTER I.

Opening Paragraph of Margaret's Memoirs.—Remarks.—Her Father's House at Lanthecourt.—Terreau.—Margaret's Residence at Verosvre.—Claude and Philiberte Alacoque.—Their Children.—Birth of Margaret.—Copy of her Baptismal Register.—Her Early Years.—Her removal to the Chateau of her Godmother.—Incidents.—Death of her Father.—She is sent to a Convent School.

"O my only Love! how deeply am I indebted to Thee for having, with Thy benedictions, prevented me from my earliest youth, rendering Thyself master and possessor of my heart, though Thou well knewest how that ungrateful heart would resist Thee!"

Thus does the servant of God commence her Memoirs, her soul escaping in a touching transport of love and gratitude. Obliged to speak of herself, such being the will of her superiors, she has scarcely taken the pen to relate the circumstances of her life, when she recalls the inestimable graces with which it has pleased the celestial Spouse to favor her from her most tender age, and this she does with a lively and natural eloquence, which it is not in our power to equal. But of her family, of her country, she says nothing, or nearly nothing. Docile to

the voice which says: *Forget thy people and thy Father's house*, she treats only of those things which she judges necessary to explain, in the recital of her interior life, the ways and conduct of Divine Providence. It is then for us, by supplying her omissions, to satisfy the pious curiosity of the reader.

The village of Verosvre, where she passed her first years, is hidden, so to say, in one of the last undulations of the gently inclining hills of Mâconnais, which terminate some leagues from Charolles, on the romantic territory of the ancient earldom and bailiwick of Charolais. A narrow valley, of gloomy aspect, poorly cultivated, is furrowed by a sparkling stream, which finds for itself a rugged bed in the midst of rocks. Above the ravine where flows this rivulet, is seen to the right the village, with its reconstructed church of native granite, which will doubtless be one day dedicated to the Sacred Heart: it is of Roman architecture, and of the greatest simplicity. To the left, on the banks of a canal of irregular outline, fed by the same waters, rises the old manor of Terreau, whose avenues, hedged by lime and elm-trees, recall by their symmetry and beauty the time when Margaret, yet a child, frequented their shade. Here she dwelt, but this was not the place of her birth. Her father's house once stood on the brow of a hill, opposite Terreau, in the little hamlet of Lanthecourt; to-day, the pilgrim vainly seeks to discover the least vestige of it, for it was long since reduced to ashes. But there still stands in the village of Verosvre, not far from the church, the house in which, after her father's death, she dwelt with the rest of her family, nearly all the years of her youth, in the midst of great trials. It is a simple farm-house, the out-buildings of which were grouped around the dwelling of the owner, apparently a citizen.

The main part of this residence is a drawing-room, decorated by a village painter, whose brilliant colors were laid on with little regard to taste: his rude pictures are said to be contemporaneous with Margaret, and were probably executed to give the house a festive appearance at the period when projects for her establishment in the world were being discussed. In one of the chambers stands a wooden altar, on which the priests of the vicinity occasionally celebrate the sacred mysteries, as though these walls, a true sanctuary, were already dedicated to God, in honor of her who consecrated them by her virtues.

In this little corner of Charolais, then, in the hamlet of Lanthecourt, the parish of Versovre, the diocese of Autun, God placed the cradle of His servant Margaret.

Here, toward the middle of the seventeenth century, in the stormy years of the minority of Louis XIV., the laborious birth (*enfantement*) of a great reign, lived in easy circumstances the virtuous parents of Margaret, Claude Alacoque and Philiberte Lamyn, both remarkable for their piety and charity toward the poor. Besides this blessed child, they had two other daughters who died in infancy; and four sons, two of whom survived the Blessed Margaret. We shall see them, attracted like all the world, by so brilliant a light, become imitators and fervent disciples of her whom they called by the sweet name of sister.*

* We give the names of the seven children of Claude and Philiberte Alacoque, in the order of their birth: John. Claude Philibert, Catherine, Chrysostom, MARGARET, Gilbert, James. John, Catherine, and James died in childhood; Claude Philibert was a lawyer, and died September 25, 1665. Chrysostom, like his father, embraced the profession of law, and James the ecclesiastical state. They both settled at Bois-Sainte-Marie, of which James became parish priest, and Chrysostom perpetual mayor. In 1703, the following entry was made in *L'Armo-*

This family, though neither rich nor noble, enjoyed ease and reputation superior to its fortune. M. Alacoque held the office of royal notary, and as his reputation for integrity equalled his knowledge of business, several lords of neighboring manors confided to him the administration of their manorial justice. He was Judge of Terreau, La Roche, Courcheval and Pressy.

Margaret came into the world on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, July 22, 1647. She was baptized on the 25th, in the parish church of Verosvre, by her uncle, Anthony Alacoque, who was also her godfather; another uncle, Toussaint de la Roche, held the child at the font. Her godmother was the Lady Margaret,* wife of Claude de Fautrières, Lord of Verosvre.†

rial de Bourgagne: "Chrysostome Alacoque, maire perpetuel de Bourg-les-Marie (sic), porte d'or à un coq de gueules en chef, et un lion de même en pointe." He was still living when the first juridical informations were taken of the Blessed, and testified to the virtues she practised under his eyes from her tenderest years.

As this is going to press, we receive from the descendants and heirs of Chrysostom Alacoque the fac-simile of his armorial bearings as they were found on a precious family picture. They differ somewhat from those given him by the *Armorial of Burgundy*, 1703.

* Monsieur and Madame de Fautrières dwelt in the Manor of Terreau.

† The following is a copy of the baptismal register of the Blessed Margaret, preserved in the presbytery of Versovre: "Marguerite, fille de Claude Alacoque, Notaire royal, et de dame Philiberte La Main, a esté baptisé par moy soubsigné curé de Verosure, le jendy vinct cinquieme Juillet, 1647, et a esté son parrain moy Antoine Alacoque, Prêtre, curé dudict lieu (*en surcharge:* et Toussaint de la Roche l'a portee sur les sacrés fonts baptismaux), et sa Marraine, Mademoizelle Marguerite de St. Amour, femme de Mons. de Courcheval. Lesquels se sont soubsignés.

C. DE FAUTRIÈRES. M. DE ST. AMOUR.
COURCHEVAL. ANT. ALACOQUE."

By an ineffable disposition of that Infinite Wisdom *whose delights are to be with the children of men*, and who loves *to show Himself first to them*, grace in this child preceded reason; to know herself and to love God were for her but one thing. He who was to become master of her heart made her see thus early the hideousness of sin, and conceive such a horror of it, that the least stain was to her an insupportable torment; so that, to repress her childish vivacity, her parents had only to say that she could not gratify it without danger of sin: all the sallies of her impetuosity yielded to the power of this one word. Incessantly she pronounced these words, of which she could not yet comprehend the sense: "My God, I consecrate to Thee my purity; I make Thee a vow of perpetual chastity." She made this vow more expressly one day between the two elevations of the Mass, being strongly attracted to do so, while she assisted at the Holy Sacrifice, on bended knees, as she was accustomed to do from her tenderest years. "I knew not," said she, "what I had promised, nor the signification of the word *vow*, still less that of the word *chastity*." But God, who had dictated to her these words, was pleased at her prompt obedience, and received as a sweet odor the first fruits of her holocaust, a true morning oblation. As He continued to draw her thus sweetly to Himself, she could find no pleasure in the things of this life, her most ardent desire was to bury herself in solitude. "But," says she, "the fear of meeting men restrained me." Thus did the Holy Spirit who directed her, and whose least movements she followed with docility, teach her, at an age so tender, to unite the prudence of the serpent to the simplicity of the dove.

How jealously did not the Queen of Virgins watch over her whom her Son had chosen for His Spouse!

Three times—we know not under what circumstances—she preserved her from the greatest perils. During these early years, not daring, in her *naïve* humility, to address the Son, she incessantly recurred to the Mother, and daily she knelt on the bare ground, her knees uncovered, to offer her the little crown of the rosary. If sometimes she yielded ever so slightly to negligence, she was reproved with a severity full of tenderness. Daughter of Mary, for such is the name she was one day to bear, was it not meet that she should thus early be formed by her mother to all the duties of Christian piety?

As she grew thus, bedewed with the pure waters of grace, a simple flower of the field, already so pleasing to God and His angels, Madame de Fautrières, not wishing to bear in vain the name of godmother, eagerly desired to have her with her, that she might give her the first tincture of Christian virtue, and teach her her prayers. The parents of Margaret, well pleased at this, sent her to the castle of this noble lady. At first, she regretted Lanthecourt, and her mother's caresses, but soon she became greatly pleased with her new residence, not indeed for sake of the delights of this feudal manor, but because she was nearer to the Church. To cross the brook which bathes the inclosure of the chateau, and to gain the direct path to the village, was for her an easy task; and as she frequented only the house of God, whenever she was missing, she was sure to be found prostrate at the foot of the altar, her hands joined, like an adoring angel. What was her occupation during the long hours she spent in this place? She herself could not tell, but she never grew weary *there*. Gladly would she have spent thus whole nights and days, without even eating or drinking. This, an extraordinary attraction for a child of her age, strengthened day by day, and became the source of all

the great things she afterwards accomplished for the glory of God and the love of the Saviour of men. While at Terreau, she gave a great proof of the supernatural penetration with which she was endowed as regards all that concerns purity of heart. Two women of the manor took care of her, one of whom was very pious, but austere and stern in her manner; the other had pleasing qualities, but was deficient in virtue: Margaret, who instinctively knew that this amiable exterior hid a perverse soul and a criminal conscience, avoided the latter and attached herself to the former.

She was but eight years old, when, by the death of her father, the government of this young and numerous family fell into weak hands. This was the first of the sorrows by which she was initiated into the science of Calvary. Charged with the tutelage of five children, the care of a house, the management of business, which necessitated long and frequent absence, Madame Alacoque soon saw that she was unequal to the task of accomplishing duties so varied, and therefore wisely resolved to place her daughter in the school of the Sisters of St. Clare, at Charolles. Till then, Margaret had received her education "only from domestics and villagers." Three or four years passed in this house, during which she learned to speak and write her own language, not indeed with the grace and elegance of many distinguished women of her time, but correctly, and with a propriety of diction which greatly enhanced the sublimity of her thoughts. Admitted at the age of ten to the Holy Table, her First Communion rendered bitter the innocent pleasures she had previously tasted, and redoubled her attraction for solitude and prayer. To become still more perfectly the master of her heart, God visited her with sickness. Stretched on a bed of pain, she languished four years

and nearly lost the use of her limbs. Her mother, greatly alarmed, took her at the end of two years from the good Sisters, who desired to keep her always. Had it depended on herself, Margaret, who regarded them all as saints, would gladly have made her vows among them, though she regretted that they did not lead more solitary lives. But God, who had special designs on her, willed otherwise.

There was then at Charolles a monastery of the Visitation; but, from some cause or other, Margaret had never set a foot in it. There was nothing human in the attraction which, later on, placed her among the daughters of St. Francis de Sales.

CHAPTER II.

Margaret's Return from Charolles.—Trials.—Her Illness.—Her Recovery.—Affection of her Mother and Brothers for her.—Her Reminiscences of her Girlhood.—Supernatural Favors.—Domestic Persecution.—Sufferings of her Mother.

Trials were not wanting to Margaret: while yet a child she had to weep over her father, and she reached adolescence a prey to indefinable sufferings which endangered her life. As the skill of physicians availed nothing, and as, being unable to take food or sleep, she seemed already on the verge of the grave, she resolved to consecrate herself to the Blessed Virgin: she vowed, doubtless with the consent of her mother, that if Mary obtained her cure, she would one day become one of her daughters, and she had scarcely done so when she was restored to health. At the same time, she experienced renewed tenderness and care from this amiable Mother, who taught her to accomplish the will of God, and reprehended her for her most trivial failings. One day, as she began to say the rosary in a sitting posture, Mary appeared to her and thus reprimanded her: "What! is it possible, my child, that you would serve me so negligently?" These words she never forgot; they were to her a preservative against tepidity.

Here we will give details of a touching nature, gathered from one of Margaret's brothers who survived all the family, and whose juridical deposition, made to the dio-

cesan authorities, figures in the process of her beatification.*

"This holy child," says Chrysostom, her brother, who during nearly twenty years had various opportunities of observing her,—"this holy child, when scarcely eight, used mental prayer, having learned it of God alone; and so fervently did she apply to it, that she forgot to eat and drink, remaining absorbed in it daily two hours in the morning and as many in the evening; and so well did she choose her time for this, that it never prevented her compliance with the commands of her mother, and even of her brothers, whom she obeyed with a charming diligence and modesty, performing her spiritual exercises before daybreak and at the close of the evening. But the servants perceiving her vigils, told her mother of it, who, to prevent her watching, made her sleep with herself; this was a great mortification to Margaret, but she was too humble and submissive to manifest the pain it caused her.

Next comes the detail of her mortifications: vigils, fasts thrice a week, her cilice made by herself with small chains of iron, retrenchments "from all the delicacies allowed her," and which she distributed to the poor, using only coarse food, notwithstanding her delicate constitution.

These pious excesses were not slow to produce various infirmities. The first was a violent pain in her side. She never mentioned it till one day, having fallen, it escaped her that her side pained her more than usual, and thus she betrayed her secret. Then her limbs were covered with ulcers. But, ingenious to procure sufferings, she

* Besides the deposition preserved in the archives of the bishopric of Autun, we have at hand a manuscript memoir by Chrysostom Alacoque.

profited of this evil to obtain leave to sleep alone. Her maladies now increased to such a degree as to cause her mother the most lively apprehension. In vain Margaret assured her that it was nothing, adding that she must have but little courage to complain of so trifling a pain: to entreaties Madame Alacoque added commands, insisting that her daughter should try some remedies. A physician was called, but all his prescriptions gave no relief. Finally, after some months, the mother having wished to judge herself of the gravity of the evil, Margaret said: "You see, my dear mother, the utter weakness of human remedies. I have now obeyed all your commands, but remember what I tell you; God, who has sent me this light affliction, seeing that I have not profited of it, will heal me before the expiration of another month. To console you in the grief this little suffering causes you, I will join my prayers to yours, and we shall obtain of God a cure, the principal advantage of which will be to pacify and rejoice you."

"Wonderful to relate," proceeds M. Alacoque, "at the end of a novena which they made together, her pains entirely ceased, and no traces of the ulcers remained." She called her mother and told her, in secret, of her perfect cure, whereupon both prostrated themselves before a crucifix, to thank God for this new proof of His infinite mercy and goodness.

"My dear child," said the mother as she rose, "since God has restored to you the health for which I have so long besought Him, He wishes, no doubt, that you take care of it, that you may be able to support me in my old age. I entreat you, in His holy Name, to grant me this satisfaction." "Be not uneasy," replied Margaret, "God will give me strength sufficient to serve you." And, in effect, during the few years Madame Alacoque had still

to live, her daughter, despite her astonishing austerities, enjoyed perfect health.

Such are, at the distance of fifty years, the recollections which M. Alacoque had retained of this dear and venerated sister, whom his eye had followed through all the rugged paths of a truly Christian life; recollections very familiarly, no doubt, and even a little vulgarly expressed, here and there; but which, nevertheless, render palpable to us—in the war this generous soul so early declared against self-love—all the characters of true sanctity.

To inure herself to this austere life, Margaret had to conquer a lively temperament, which made her find too much pleasure in the amusements of youth, and the commerce of friendship. Cherished by her mother and brothers, their excessive tenderness seemed to authorize her, as she ingenuously confessed, "to give herself a good time." There was even a cooling of her fervor to some extent, not indeed that she ever gave herself to the vain joys of the world; but a few times in her life, especially after her recovery of health, she became too sensible to vanity and the affection evinced for her. One of the greatest faults she ever committed was, that at the time of carnival, she permitted herself to be persuaded to accompany her brothers and friends to a ball, dressed as a mask. She bewailed this with a bitterness that reminds us of the tears St. Teresa shed over faults assuredly not very grave in character.

But God, who had designed to reign alone in her heart, sent new trials to destroy the enchantment of worldly pleasures. He permitted that her mother, no longer able to attend to business, should intrust with it lowbred, ignorant persons, who, abusing her imprudent confidence, soon reduced her and her children to a state of galling servitude. Margaret, in her Memoirs, is silent

as to the name and quality of these people, who were probably only servants, and she never blames them, regarding them as instruments which it pleased God to use to accomplish on her His ineffable designs. But, endowed as she was with a soul naturally refined and haughty, we may conjecture what her sufferings must have been, from the emotion which, twenty years later, breaks through the charitable reserve of her language.

"We had no longer power in our own house," she writes, "and we durst not do the least thing without permission. There was continual war: every thing was under lock and key, so that I could not even go to Mass without asking for my hood and cloak. I confess that I felt this keenly; I could do nothing, not even go out, until three persons agreed to it. From that time my affections eagerly turned toward the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar, in which I now sought all my joy and consolation. But, being some distance from the village church, I could not go there without the leave of three persons; and it frequently happened that if one agreed to my going, another would oppose it. Often, when the tears escaped me, they would accuse me of having made an appointment with some young person, and attribute my grief to hypocrisy; I, who felt so great a horror of any thing of the kind, that I would rather be torn into a thousand pieces than entertain the least thought of it. Not knowing what to do, I would hide in some corner of the garden or stable, and there kneeling, would pour out my heart with tears before my God, imploring the intercession of Mary, my good Mother, in whom I placed entire confidence. Sometimes I remained thus for whole days, without eating or drinking. Sometimes the poor people of the village would, out of compassion, bring me toward evening a little milk or fruit. When I returned

to the house, it was with fear and trembling, like a poor criminal about to hear the sentence of his condemnation. I would esteem it a happiness to beg my bread, rather than live in this manner, for often I dared not take a piece of bread from the table. The moment I returned, the batteries played on me more fiercely than ever; I was reproached with having neglected my duties in the house, and the care of the children of these dear benefactors of my soul; and, without giving me time to say a word, they set me to work with the servants, after which I passed the night as I had passed the day, in tears at the foot of my crucifix."

It was there that Jesus Christ awaited her. He made Himself present to her soul, and taught her to suffer for Him as He had suffered for her; and so penetrated was she at the intimate view of His Dolorous Passion, that she desired that these pains, so contrary to natural inclination should never cease.

Incessantly her Saviour presented himself to her, now under the figure of the *Ecce Homo*, now fastened to the cross or carrying it on his shoulders, and the amorous compassion this excited in her made all her sufferings appear light. She grieved when, as sometimes happened, the hands that were uplifted to strike her, restrained perhaps by a movement of pity, failed to exercise on her all their severity. He who reigned in her heart reminded her on these occasions of the way in which He had been treated, and urged her to endure without murmur or complaint what He taught her to regard as the just punishment of her sins, adding that she should cheerfully pardon her persecutors and be ever ready to sacrifice herself for them, her pleasure being always to speak well of them, while she should be grieved if she heard them blamed or censured.

But, if she pardoned so generously what she herself suffered, it was not so easy to pardon the insults offered to her mother. Her heart revolted at the sight of them, and she acknowledged that this was the most bitter trial she ever endured. When the poor old lady was worse than usual, she was abandoned entirely to the care of her daughter, but with incredible barbarity her persecutors often withheld the very necessaries of life, so that Margaret was sometimes obliged, to her own great confusion, to beg from the villagers eggs and other little things needful for a sick person.

Once, when Madame Alacoque was attacked with erysipelas in the head, of a most alarming character, they caused her to be bled by a common surgeon, who, when taking leave, remarked that his patient could not recover except by a miracle. Poor Margaret was almost in despair, but, far from consoling her, these inhuman creatures overwhelmed her with injuries and reproaches. In her distress, she had recourse to Jesus and Mary. It was the Feast of the Circumcision: during Mass she besought Our Lord, with great simplicity, to teach her what she ought to do for her mother, conjuring Him to become Himself her physician and her remedy. Her prayer was not unheard. On her return, she found that an abscess, which had gathered on the invalid's cheek, suddenly broke, leaving a large wound which emitted an intolerable odor. Without advice or experience, she who had never dressed wounds, and could not even bear to look at them, undertook the office of surgeon with such dexterity and success, that in a few days she had the happiness of seeing her mother perfectly cured.

In the midst of these trials, which so eloquently taught her the instability of earthly things, she felt an increased attraction for prayer. Prayer! she knew but its name;

and yet that name was sufficient to ravish her heart. As she had no one to direct her in this holy exercise, our Lord, to whom she recurred, vouchsafed Himself to become her master, and to teach her the method she ever after continued to practise.

This divine Saviour made her prostrate herself humbly in His divine presence, to ask pardon of all the faults which she had committed against Him; and after having adored and offered Him her prayer, He presented Himself to her in the mystery He willed her to contemplate, applying thereto the mind of His servant so entirely, and holding absorbed in Him all her powers, in such a manner, that she experienced no distraction. She drew from this sublime contemplation an insatiable desire to communicate and to suffer.

As we have shown, sufferings were not wanting to her; but her desire for the Holy Eucharist met with continual obstacles, whether from the captivity to which she was subjected, or the scruples of an unenlightened director who failed to comprehend the designs of God on so privileged a soul. Margaret had a holy envy for souls who communicated frequently and could visit Our Lord in His tabernacle whenever they pleased. Ingenious to propitiate by a respectful demeanor the domestic tyrants who ruled her, she strove at least to obtain permission to pass some moments before Him; and vehemently drawn toward this only good, whose sweet presence dissipated all her sorrows, she could not remain near the end of the church, but the transports of her love triumphing over her confusion, she placed herself on the steps of the sanctuary, regardless of the gaze of the people.

Thus passed, amid tears and sorrows, the early youth of Margaret; thus did she learn to carry her cross. Yet

these trials had their term, but another cross, and of a more delicate nature, was in prospect. It came when she was of an age to be established in the world.

CHAPTER III.

Margaret's Friends urge her to Marry.—The World and Jesus Christ Dispute her Heart.—She seeks among the Lives of the Saints for one that might be easily imitated.—She begins to teach the Village Children.—Temptations on all sides.—Ultimate Triumph of Grace.

It is not without reason that our Saviour has placed at the head of the evangelical counsels this great maxim:—*If any one cometh to Me, and hateth not his father, his mother, his wife, his children, his brothers and sisters, yea even his own soul, he cannot be My disciple.* (St. Luke, xiv. 26.)

We know how St. Jane de Chantal, to the wonder of all, passed over the prostrate body of her son, to go where God called her; and the astonishing victories a Louis Gouzaga and a Stanislaus Kotska gained over the paternal tenderness which so violently opposed their vocation. Similar examples are not rare in the annals of sanctity; indeed, the history of monastic life is full of them, so true is it that the Divine Master has always put at this price the signal privilege of being ranked in the glorious category of His most cherished disciples. A combat of this nature Margaret had to sustain, when those who had the disposal of her judged that the time was come for fixing her in the world by irrevocable engagements.

Ah! doubtless had she been guided by her own impulses, she had not hesitated to declare aloud her intention never to contract an alliance, but with God, and to

reject disdainfully all other prospects. But, alas! she knew too well that such an avowal would be a poignant grief to her poor mother, who could not do without her. That she might not grieve her so intensely, she believed herself justified in temporizing, not at all suspecting the peril to which these delays should expose her. Behold the consequence of this too human prudence.

As it was decided to procure her an establishment, her persecutors began to treat her differently; instead of confining her to the house, they made her move in society, and directed her to comport herself in such a manner as to make the most of her exterior advantages. From the solitary hamlet of Lanthecourt, where passed her first years, her family had removed to the farm-house still shown in the village of Versovre. She was ordered to dress more gayly, that she might more suitably entertain the numerous guests now invited to the house; in short, she was compelled to submit to a servitude less rigorous in appearance, but far more contrary to her desires than the former. In the beginning especially, it was only with regret, and by constraint, that she adopted this mode of life. Soon she had several highly advantageous matrimonial offers, but she refused them, very politely, and not without hinting her unwillingness to receive any proposals of that nature. But her mother's tears gave rise to a violent interior struggle, which eventually shook her resolution of dedicating herself to God in holy chastity.

In the unhappy situation in which she was placed, Madame Alacoque had no hope but in her daughter; once married, Margaret could put an end to her sufferings by offering her an asylum; but if she became a Religious, she should leave her mother without any consolation, to sink under accumulated trials. Margaret alone had saved her life; she alone continued to preserve

it by her devoted care; the mother's death would be the consequence of separation from this cherished child. No wonder that the tears of this poor mother flowed so copiously, no wonder that their mute eloquence moved the heart of her sweet child, no wonder that the reiterated solicitations of the afflicted lady began to make some impression on the compassionate heart of her daughter. Urged by these painful reflections, it is hardly surprising that she should feel some slight inclination to settle herself in the world. And yet, her vow of chastity was ever present to her mind, a vow which she could not violate without opening hell beneath her feet; a terrible alternative which left her no repose of conscience, remote as she was from all persons who could encourage or advise her. Finally, filial love triumphing, she persuaded herself, though not without difficulty, that her vow, made at so tender an age, could not be so obligatory that it could not be dispensed with; this was, strictly speaking, true; but, even with a dispensation, could she escape the reproaches of her conscience, and the misfortunes likely to result from her losing a sublime vocation, and losing it through her own fault? She strove to silence these reproaches by saying—so ingenious is nature in deceiving us—that once in the cloister she could no longer give alms, that obedience would deprive her of the power to practise her customary austerities, that, in fine, the religious life was something too sublime for her, and that she would only be lost in it. These were but wily suggestions of the father of lies, as she afterward acknowledged; but not having an enlightened guide in whom to place her confidence, she continued for some time to be the sport of these illusions and snares.

Behold her, then, decided on following the flowery path before her. Well was it for her that thorns were mingled

with the flowers that seemed to fascinate her, and that earthly joys became bitter to her. Hear how she herself describes the agitation of her soul, in the midst of these deceitful pleasures, in language which bears more than one trait of resemblance to the *Confessions* of the great Saint Augustine:—

"I began to see the world, and to decorate myself in order to please it, seeking to amuse myself as much as I could. But Thou, my God, sole witness of the bitterness and duration of my interior struggles, under which I should a thousand times have succumbed, were it not for the extraordinary succors of Thy mercy, Thou hadst designs far different from those I formed in my heart. Thou didst show me in this, as in several other encounters, that it was hard for me to kick against the powerful goad of Thy love. My malice and infidelity made me use all my endeavors to resist its attraction, and extinguish within me its movements; but it was in vain; for, in the midst of company and diversions, this divine love pierced me with such inflamed darts, that my heart seemed entirely consumed. The pain I felt almost stupefied me; and yet it did not suffice to detach my ungrateful heart; I had to be dragged, as it were with cords, to constrain me to follow Him who called me. Thus did He draw me to a retired place where He severely reprimanded me. Alas! He seemed jealous of my wretched heart!"

There, prostrate on the ground, she begged pardon of Our Lord; after which, by His orders, she took a severe discipline. But she nevertheless returned to her vain pleasures. At night, when she put off "the cursed livery of Satan,"—thus she calls her festive array,—Our Lord appeared to her such as He was after His scourging, purple with blood and covered with wounds. He re-

proached her for her vanity, which had reduced Him to this state, and the little account she made of His suffering after having experienced so many proofs of His love. "This," says she, "was imprinted so strongly on my mind, and made so many dolorous wounds on my heart, that I wept bitterly, and it would not be easy for me to explain all I suffered and all that passed within me."

She was thus struggling for nearly three years, vainly seeking in macerations of the flesh some solace: neither the chains which she fastened on her arms, and which cut so deeply into the flesh, that they could not be removed without intense pain; nor the knotted cords with which she encircled her waist, and which she drew so tightly that she could neither eat nor breathe without pain; nor the planks and pointed sticks which strewed her bed; nor her bloody disciplines, could ease her conscience; for God demanded not her blood but her heart; and as, on the other hand, her domestic tribulations, of which it was impossible to foresee the term, left her no respite, she visibly drooped and pined away.

Pursued by a fear of God's judgments, she sometimes conceived an ardent desire to become holy. Then she would open the Lives of the Saints, and seek for one that could be easily imitated; but her search was vain, the saints became saints only by the cross. She then addressed herself to Our Lord, who showed her the beauty of virtue, of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and, inflamed at this sight, she resolved anew to consecrate herself by vow to practice them all her life. To prepare her for this great sacrifice, her Divine Spouse taught her to do all through obedience and love of Him.

Works are the proof of love; but, because God *has no need of our gifts*, it is by our kindness to our neighbor that He judges of our love for Him. He breathed into

the heart of His servant such a tender love for the poor, that she desired to live in their midst; such a lively compassion for their miseries, that she gave them all she had. Not content with dressing their wounds, she kissed them, and Our Lord kindly blessing her charitable care, she often had the consolation of seeing them in a short time perfectly healed of inveterate maladies. But, still more touched with the miseries of these souls, she neglected not to bestow spiritual alms; and it was a blessed sight to see her surrounded by the poor children of the village, attracted by her bounty, whom she instructed in their prayers and catechism. In winter she collected them in a large room of her mother's house, from which she and they were sometimes unceremoniously dismissed, and great was her confusion when surprised in this charitable, holy occupation:—"Dear sister," said her brother Chrysostom, one day, smiling, "are you, then, going to become a school-mistress?" "No, brother," she replied, "but who is there to teach these poor, dear little ones?"

As to obedience, she found ample matter for its practice, even in the exercise of charity; for she imposed on herself a rule never to give any thing away without the consent of the persons who held such a high hand over her, and who, notwithstanding, reproached her for pillaging the house to feed her poor. It is true that her mother, by whom she was tenderly beloved, could refuse nothing to her caresses. But this mother, tied down as she was, what could she do? Margaret had, then, to bear all rebuffs, and the more submissive she showed herself the more they persecuted her. This made her say afterward, that her monastic obedience was nothing to the obedience she practised in her own house, to these tyrants.

While she was thus serving her apprenticeship to the

religious virtues, Our Lord exercised over her all His authority. More than once, when she took some profane recreation, He appeared to her covered with the wounds of His flagellation:—"Dost thou then wish for pleasure," said He, "while I enjoyed none? I endured bitter torments to gain thy heart, and yet thou darest to dispute it with Me?" These words pierced her heart; she was vanquished. One day, she testified to her Divine Spouse her astonishment that He had not abandoned her because of her infidelities:—"It is," said He, "because I designed to make of thee a composition of My love and mercy." Another time, He said to her:—"I have chosen thee for My Spouse, and we mutually promised fidelity when thou didst make Me a vow of chastity. It was I who urged thee to make it, before the world had any share in thy heart, because I wanted thy whole heart, unsullied by any earthly affection; and, to preserve it such, I have preserved thy will from all malice that would corrupt it; afterward, I placed thee under the care of My Holy Mother, that she might fashion thee according to My designs."

Effectually, this Divine Mother ceased not to watch over her cherished child, to whom once more she addressed, as in her childhood, salutary reproofs. This was at the decisive hour when her struggle was renewed with more violence than ever, and when she was, as she herself relates, on the point of yielding.

O how it should confound us to see that, after so many signal graces, after such numerous trials of every description, such great victories over self-love, this strong and generous soul, to whom not one of us dare compare ourself, is shaken to its depths, and again presumes to put Jesus Christ in competition with the world! The world she loved not, for she knew it not; but through her exces-

sive tenderness for her mother she is on the point of consenting to carry its detested yoke, closing her ears to the voice of her celestial Spouse and depriving herself of His sweet caresses. So true is it, that when there is a question of our salvation, or perfection, nothing is more foolish than that we should trust to our own weak virtue!

She was now twenty; her mother, ever a prey to the same apprehensions, ceased not to represent to her that she had reached an age at which it is desirable for a young lady to select her partner for life. We may easily conjecture all that an afflicted mother would urge under such circumstances to induce compliance; and the end of it was, that Margaret persuaded herself that it would be cruel to resist any longer her poor parent, or lengthen the period of her suspense and anxiety.

The devil, who had long sought this favorable opportunity (for him), returned to the charge with increased audacity. "Wretched creature," he repeated, "how couldst thou think of becoming a Religious? Thou wouldst only succeed in making thyself a laughing-stock to everybody, for thou wilt never persevere; and how great will be thy confusion when thou quittest the religious habit to return to the world! Where wilt thou hide thyself after that?"

This last assault was the most terrible. Straitened on every side, her habitual energy failed her, and she soon adopted the views of her mother. "Yet," says she, "I could not think of marriage without tears, for I always had a dreadful horror of it." Her vow of chastity was more than ever in her thoughts; but in so important a matter she had need of a wise director, and, deprived of this support, she knew not what course to take. Finally, the Divine Master, who sometimes tries His own, but

never abandons them in imminent peril, came to her assistance in the following manner, as she herself relates in her Memoirs, thus:—

"Once, after Communion, He made me see that He was the richest, the most beautiful, the most accomplished, and the most perfect of all lovers; and He reproached me that, after promising fidelity to Him, I yet thought, after so many years, of contracting another alliance. 'Know,' said He, 'that if thou insultest Me by such preference, I will abandon thee forever; but if thou remainest faithful to Me, I will never leave thee, and I will render thee victorious over thy enemies. I excuse thy ignorance because thou dost not yet know Me, but if thou wilt follow Me, I will teach thee to know Me, I will manifest Myself to thee.'

"In speaking thus, He calmed me so that my soul experienced the most delicious peace. I determined from that moment rather to die than to be unfaithful to Him. It seemed to me that I was eased of heavy chains, or that I was restored to the light of day after a long and gloomy night. I felt as though I had nothing more to fear. I said to myself that, though the religious life were a purgatory, it would be better for me to purify myself therein for the rest of my life, than to precipitate myself into hell, which I had deserved a thousand times by my sins, and my resistance to His grace.

"Determined to embrace the religious life, my Divine Spouse, as if He feared I should again escape Him, asked me to consent that He should become master of my liberty, because I was so weak. I cheerfully gave this consent, and so strongly did He seize upon my liberty, that it seemed to me that I no longer possessed it. I renewed my vow, beginning now to comprehend it; and I told Him that though it should cost me a thousand lives, I

should never become any thing but a Religious. I declared this aloud, and I dismissed all suitors, however advantageous their offers might be. My mother, seeing this, no longer wept in my presence, but she wept with those who spoke to her about it, and they failed not to tell me that I should be the cause of her death if I quitted her, that I should be answerable to God for it, since she had no one but me to serve her, and that I could as well become a Religious after her decease as during her life. One of my brothers, especially, who loved me greatly, used all his influence to dissuade me from my purpose, and promised to share his property with me, the better to establish me in the world. But, to all that could be urged, my heart was as insensible as a rock."

This terminated the long struggle in which, as she humbly confessed, she was several times on the point of succumbing. Doubtless she had still much to endure, and many obstacles to surmount, ere she could break the sweet and strong bands that enchained her existence to that of her mother. But peace had entered her soul, for already her choice was made. She had the right of reckoning on Him who is faithful to His promises, and who would conduct her not less sweetly than powerfully, where He willed that she should consume herself in His presence in flames of the purest love and adoration.

CHAPTER IV.

Margaret's Relations urge her to join the Ursulines.—She is suddenly recalled from Mâcon.—Her Friends seek to detain her at Home.—Her Attraction for the Visitation Order.—She enters the Convent of Paray.—The Nuns have little Hope of her Perseverance.

The world was vanquished, but it designed to return to the charge. It was too much that she should be faithful to her vocation; the world could not bear to see her sacrifice without turning something of it to its own profit. Three years passed before Margaret was permitted to follow the attraction which inclined her to consecrate herself to God in the Order of the Visitation,—an attraction not less powerful than mysterious, and, humanly speaking, inexplicable.

Visiting at Mâcon with her brother Chrysostom, an uncle, who was also her guardian, and who had a daughter in the Ursuline Convent of that town, took her to see her cousin, Sister St. Columba. Scarcely had she set her foot in the convent than there was a general conspiracy to keep her there. The Sister, eager to have Margaret with her, used all her endeavors to persuade her to stay, while the uncle generously offered to defray part of her expenses, and the whole community evinced eagerness to reckon among its members a person of such rare merit. In short, they refused to let her go, if her brother would consent to set out alone to Versovre.

Margaret, deeply touched with these cordial advances,

felt, nevertheless, that God called her elsewhere. "Should I enter this house," said she, to Sister St. Columba, "it would be only for love of you. I wish to go where I have neither relations nor acquaintances, that I may be a Religious solely for the love of God." Where, then, was the house to which God secretly called her? Of this she herself was yet ignorant. There was a Visitation Convent at Mâcon, in which were some relatives of hers, but she was not permitted to visit it; indeed, her friends even sought to inspire her with contempt and dislike for this pious institute. But, do what they would, she was irresistibly attracted by the sweet name of St. Mary. One day, as she gazed on a picture of St. Francis de Sales, it seemed to her that the holy Founder of the Visitation looked on her with utmost tenderness, calling her his child, and from that moment she always regarded him as her father. But it was not easy to resist the earnest and affectionate solicitations of which she was the object. Perhaps she had yielded, had not God, in an unforeseen manner, come to her assistance, and rescued her from this new species of persecution.

Suddenly came the news that her mother was on the point of death, and one of her brothers seriously ill. She set out at once, travelled all night, and reached Versovre, exhausted with fatigue and emotion. Her mother, whose illness had been caused by her fear of losing this dear daughter, was quickly cured by the very sight of her, and her brother, too, soon recovered. But if poor Margaret escaped one danger, it was to fall into another, and to lose nearly all hope of ever becoming a Religious. Was it not evident that her mother could not live without her, whose absence had almost killed her? This was repeated on all sides by venerable ecclesiastics and other pious persons—every thing conspired to heighten the

combat which filial love and the fear of God's judgments had begun within her; she was cruelly tempted to despair. But being fortified in these trials, she grew in the love of her crucified Redeemer, her cherished Spouse.

Sometimes casting herself at the foot of the crucifix, she would exclaim, "O, my dear Saviour, how happy should I be if Thou wouldst imprint on me Thy suffering image!" To which Jesus replied, "This is what I will do, provided thou dost offer no resistance, and dost contribute thy part to it."

At other times, deprived of the happiness of communicating for which she ardently sighed, having no one to teach her the science of prayer, or direct her in the practice of holy mortification, and fearing to do her own will, she would sigh, "Ah, my Lord Jesus, give me some one to conduct me!" "Am I not sufficient for thee?" said this God of love tenderly. "So cherished a child cannot perish in the arms of an Omnipotent Father: what, then, canst thou fear?"

When He had sufficiently proved the faith and constancy of His servant, God sent her a good Religious of the Order of St. Francis, who came to Versovre, on the occasion of the jubilee granted by Clement X., in the beginning of his pontificate (1670). Margaret spent fifteen days writing her general confession, copying whole pages of the examen of conscience, at the risk of accusing herself of faults of which she had not the least idea, "for fear," said she, "that I may be guilty of them without knowing it." For this she was reprehended by her confessor, which made her fear she had displeased God on this occasion. But our Lord himself appeased her, telling her He forgave every thing that was done without an evil intention.

To this pious Franciscan she discovered her whole

interior, and he hesitated not to declare to M. Chrysostom Alacoque, who was now the head of the family, that he should be responsible before God for his sister's vocation. In quitting the world, Margaret had, at least, the consolation of seeing that her mother was no longer deprived of the care so necessary for her. After many delays and renewed efforts to induce her to join the Ursulines—vain projects which God baffled because they were contrary to His designs—it was decided that she should become a daughter of Mary, as she so vehemently desired. But Charolles was too near Versovre; she could not enter that house without being obliged to receive frequent visits; and, as, in those days of rough roads and slow travelling, a few leagues would suffice to place her almost beyond the reach of acquaintances, she thought of retiring to Paray-le-Monial, at the other extremity of Charolais. Accompanied by her brother, she set out from Versovre in the spring of 1671; at Charolles, where they rested, the Religious of St. Clare urged her to remain with them, but she was inflexible. No sooner had she entered the parlor of Paray-le-Monial, than she heard interiorly these words:—"Here I wish thee to remain." She told her brother that she would not go elsewhere, and she refused to leave the convent till he had made the necessary arrangements with the Superior, which he accordingly did. On that day she was dressed more elegantly than usual; joy shone on her countenance, and showed itself in all her gestures, so that some of the nuns, who knew not what was passing within her, considered all this as an indication of levity of mind, and smilingly remarked to each other, "Surely she has a most religious deportment."

She was then twenty-four, and, according to the testimony of contemporaries, was not less distinguished for

mental endowments than for the qualities of her heart. One of her Superiors, Mother Greyffié, wrote of her:—"She was naturally judicious and prudent; had a good mind, a pleasing disposition, a most charitable heart—in a word, it may be said that she was fitted to adorn a high station, if the Lord had not granted her petition to be unknown and hidden in abjection and suffering."*

Father Croiset, who was also acquainted with her, portrays her not less admirably:—"God," says he, "endowed her with much mind, a solid, refined, and penetrating judgment, a noble soul, and a great heart."

Arrived at this point of her Memoirs, the servant of God suddenly interrupts her recital. Recalling all that God had done for her, she cries out, "Alas! how often, while writing this, has He not addressed me this amorous reproach:—'See, my daughter, if ever father, passionately enamored of an only son, has given him such proofs of affection as I have given thee, and will continue to give thee. My love has not ceased from thy earliest youth to cultivate thy soul, and fashion it according to my own heart, expecting thee with patience and sweetness, without being ever tired out by thy resistance. Remember, then, that if thou shouldst ever become oblivious of the gratitude thou owest Me, failing to refer to Me the glory of all, thou wilt close against thee the inexhaustible source of My mercies and goodness.'"

But the humility of this grand soul is a sure guarantee of her perseverance. We shall soon see whether God

* It should be added, that Mother Greyffié did not become acquainted with Margaret for seven years later. The above testimony she gave only after Margaret's death. Father Croiset was but slightly acquainted with her, and that toward the end of her life.—*Franz.*

had, in the sequel, any cause to reproach her, or to stop the course of the signal favors which, till this hour, He had continued to shower on her with such lavish profusion.

CHAPTER V.

Providential Character of Margaret's Vocation.—The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Visitation Order since the days of St. Francis de Sales.—Traditions of the Early Visitandines.—Letters.

HERE we must pause to admire the ways of Providence.

The postulant who came, with such a mirthful air and in such elegant attire, to beg admittance into the monastery of Paray, was already, in the designs of God, one of the most illustrious inheritors of the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, and it was reserved for her to bring to light a treasure originally confided to the Visitation Order by its holy founder. Behold, then, why she was so invincibly drawn, not to Mâcon nor to Charolles, which eagerly sought her, but to this obscure monastery where she knew no one, and whose pious observances had been represented to her in anything but flattering colors. Ignorant, then, like the rest of the world, of the great and mysterious consequences of her vocation, but guided by an invisible hand, among all the religious families she chose precisely the one best fitted to second the mission she was one day to receive, of propagating in the Church the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus, the sweet fruits of which all the faithful taste with such joy.

What we have said is no novelty for such as have read and meditated the writings of St. Francis de Sales—his beautiful Treatise on the Love of God, his Letters, Con-

stitutions and Entertainments with his dear daughters of the monastery of Annecy. There, indeed, all breathes of the Heart of Jesus, that Heart in which the great saint made his dwelling, and whence he drew, as from their true source, the sweet ardor of his zeal and the tender impetuosity of that fraternal charity of which his works are so eloquent.

"How good is our Lord, my dear daughter," he writes to St. Jane de Chantal; "how amiable is His Heart! Let us dwell in this holy sanctuary. May this Divine Heart always live in our hearts." "The other day, considering in prayer the open side of our Lord, and seeing His Heart, it seemed good to me that our hearts should surround His Heart, and render it homage as the sovereign King of hearts."

The honey of this devotion continually distils from the lips of the holy bishop, especially in his conferences with his dear daughters of St. Mary. The Heart of Jesus is the school to which he sends them to learn the secrets of the interior life; indeed, the Order of the Visitation has been instituted only to honor the Heart of Jesus by practising the two virtues most dear to it—meekness and humility. If holy simplicity were added, it is still true that simplicity is less a special virtue than the form and fashion of the other virtues, to which it communicates a new lustre, and the last touches of perfection. Besides this is but gospel doctrine. The devotion to the Heart of Jesus, under this aspect, has no other source than the words of the Divine Master, the Incarnate Wisdom Himself:—

Learn of Me, said He, *for I am meek and humble of heart.* Meekness and humility are, then, the privileged virtues of the Heart of Jesus, our Saviour.

Now hear the Bishop of Geneva explaining to the

Religious of the Visitation the end and spirit of their Institute:—

"Now, to come to the end for which our Congregation of the Visitation has been erected, and thus comprehend more easily the peculiar spirit of the Visitation, I have always judged that it was a spirit of profound humility toward God, and great sweetness toward the neighbor." What more clear than these words? Meekness, humility —here is the whole spirit of the Visitation, all the perfection of the Daughters of Mary. Great austerities are not imposed, many would be unable to perform such; but to humble one's self, to love God and the neighbor, who can hinder them from doing this? Their whole life is consecrated to this holy exercise. "Their hands are occupied only in gathering at the foot of the Cross the little virtues of humility, meekness, and simplicity which grow there, and which are bedewed with the Blood of their Well-Beloved, nailed upon their hearts as He was once nailed upon the Cross." Hence comes the extreme sweetness of the Constitutions of the Visitation, and hence also their strength. When the heart is once with Jesus Christ, what can it cost her to sacrifice all else?

We learn, then, from St. Francis de Sales himself, that the Sisters of the Visitation have been from the beginning destined to honor the Heart of Jesus, by practising the virtues of which this Divine Heart is, for us, the most perfect model. But, still more, they possess in a gracious symbol an authentic monument of the views of their holy Founder. The sight of their armorial bearings, of which he designed the crest, must always remind them that they are daughters of the Heart of Jesus.

One morning, in June, 1611, detained at home by the duties of his office, but urged to give expression to a sudden inspiration, the Bishop of Geneva hastily seizes

the pen and writes to his holy coöperator this charming note:—

"I salute you, my very dear daughter. An appointment made this morning with two of our priests of Gex deprives me of the consolation of visiting my dear sheep, and feeding them myself with the bread of life. M. Rolland* goes to supply for my absence, but he is not a sufficiently good messenger to carry you the thought which God sent me last night: that our house of the Visitation is, by His mercy, noble and considerable enough to have its arms, its device, and its crest. I have been thinking, my dear Mother, if you agree to it, that we ought to adopt for our armorial bearings a heart pierced with two arrows, surrounded by a crown of thorns, the cavity of this heart to serve as a resting-place for the cross, which will surmount it, on which will be engraved the Sacred Names of Jesus and Mary. My daughter, I will tell you at our next interview a thousand little thoughts I have on this subject; for, truly, *our little congregation is a work of the Heart of Jesus and Mary.* The expiring Saviour has brought us forth through the opening of His Sacred Heart; it is then but just that our heart should, by careful mortification, be always surrounded by the crown of thorns that rested on the head of our Chief when love fastened Him on the throne of His mortal anguish.

"I salute you again, my daughter. I perceive our two litigants coming to interrupt the peaceful current of our thoughts. Good morning, my dear daughter."†

"What," asks very appropriately an eloquent historian of St. Chantal, "what were the thousand little thoughts

* Confidential servant of the Saint.

† From the register of Letters of St. Francis de Sales preserved in the Visitation Monastery of Pignerol.

which St. Francis de Sales had during the night, and which he desired to communicate to Mother de Chantal? By giving, on June 10, 1611—that is, nearly a century before the apparition of Our Lord to the Venerable Sister Margaret—a heart crowned with thorns and surmounted by a cross for the armorial bearings of nascent institute, did St. Francis de Sales yield to a sublime presentiment? Had he, in that blessed night, of which he gives so few details, a revelation of the grand event which, a century later, would shed so sweet a lustre over the whole Visitation Order; or did God, when He willed to give to a perverse age, soon to be filled with ruin, the tender devotion to His Sacred Heart, as a consolation and a hope, choose the Visitation to recompense it for having in its cradle adopted for its armorial bearings a heart crowned with thorns, and thus given a touching prelude of this beautiful devotion?"*

In either case, the first grace won another more brilliant and more universal, worthy, in fine, of crowning this amiable invention of the Divine Bounty, and the blessed germ, fallen into the hands of St. Francis de Sales, was destined in its own time to grow and bear fruit.

For, we may well believe that this vague presentiment did not vanish to return no more, after having brightened the cradle of the Order. No, the pious inspiration of St. Francis de Sales, explained by him in so many manners in his writings, in his conferences, and even in the arms of his noble daughters, had cast into their hearts roots too deep to be ever forgotten. Forty or fifty years later, the beautiful title of *Daughters of the Sacred Heart* was so justly won by the Visitation Sisters that there

* *History of St. Jane de Chantal*, by M. l'Abbé Bougaud.

was no hesitation in claiming it publicly for them. In the year 1657, Henri de Maupas, Bishop of Puy, very zealous for the glory of the holy Bishop of Geneva, whose beatification was daily expected, finished writing his life, which he is eager to dedicate to Pope Alexander VII., the same who, a little later, pronounced the beatification, and, very soon after, the canonization of the saint; and in this work of such high authority he declared, that "these Religious were specially established in this latter age, to be imitators of the two virtues most dear to the Heart of the Word Incarnate, which are the basis and foundation of their Order, and give them the privilege and incomparable grace of bearing the quality of DAUGHTERS OF THE HEART OF JESUS."*

Such is the constant inspiration of all the eminent souls in the spiritual posterity of St. Francis de Sales and Mother de Chantal. In this category, certainly, is Mother Anne Margaret Clément, who died in the odor of sanctity, January 3, 1661, in the monastery of Melun, which she had founded, and whose life was written by her director, Father Augustine Galice, afterward General of the Barnabites. This holy Religious was accustomed to say that her Blessed Father had made His dwelling in the Heart of Jesus, and that as Moses, by conversing with God, became the meekest of men, so Francis de Sales, "by familiarity with his dear Lover, attained the perfection of the two virtues of the Heart of Jesus, meekness and humility." And she added, that this holy legislator "was inspired to establish an order in the Church to honor the Adorable Heart of Jesus Christ, and His two cherished virtues, which are the foundation

* *La Vie du Venerable Serviteur de Dieu, François de Sales, evesque et Prince de Genève*, par Messire Henri de Maupas du Tour, evesque et Seigneur du Puy, &c., p. 510. Paris: Jacques Langlois, 1657.

of the rules and constitutions of the Visitation* Institute.

Finally, we give another testimony still more conclusive: that of Jane Benigna Gojos, a simple lay Sister of the monastery of Turin. Received into the novitiate by Mother de Chantal in 1638, she was, toward the end of her long career, contemporaneous with Margaret Mary, whom she survived two years. But they never had any mutual intercourse, and it is even probable that Sister Jane died without having ever heard Blessed Margaret Mary's name mentioned. Yet, illumined with supernatural lights, the former announced, in 1687, the important mission that the latter was called to accomplish in the Church. This was, doubtless, a great subject of joy for this pious Sister, who, having known in her youth the first Mothers of the Order, Jacqueline Favre, Charlotte de Bréchard, Anne de Chatel, used to delight in saying that they were "true daughters of the Heart of Jesus, all sweetness, all humility, all love of God, and all charity for their neighbor."†

* *La Vie de la Venerable Mère Anne-Marguérite Clément*, &c. Paris, 1686. On the title-page figures the approbation of the illustrious Cardinal Bona, couched in the most favorable terms.

† *Le Charme du divin Amour, ou la Vie de la devote Sœur Jeanne-Bénigne*, &c., par la Mère Marie-Geltrude Provane de Leyni, Religieuse du même Ordre, en 1693. Turin, 1846. By order of her Superiors, Bénigne, toward the end of her life, discovered her interior life to Mother Provane, who immediately wrote down what she had gathered at each conversation. The volume published in 1846 is wholly taken from the MS. of Mother Provane preserved at Turin. We give verbatim the passage that refers to B. Margaret Mary: "Que ce cher institut a deja doné des saintes au ciel, et quil en doit bien encor plus doné, elle distinguoit plusieurs des bones ames qui sont dèja dans l'éternité, et de celle qui sont encore vivantes. Il est certain que l'anée, 1687, que je faisois ses memoires, elle me fit conestre plusieurs

What more need we say? Is it not manifest that Providence had long prepared the ways and disposed all things for the success of the mission which Margaret Mary was destined to fulfil? In the Order which she entered, drawn by a mysterious attraction, an attraction, humanly speaking, inexplicable, she was among souls accustomed to acknowledge the sweet empire of the Heart of Jesus: to her it was specially reserved to cause to be decreed to that Adorable Heart a worship of reparation—no longer a bare private devotion, but a worship public and solemn—to make amends for the indifference and contempt of men by whom His love is so cruelly outraged. In this, effectually, consists all the devotion to the Sacred Heart, such as our Lord revealed it to His servant, and such as it has been established in the Church, after a long struggle, which lasted the whole of the eighteenth century.

It need hardly be said that the Visitation, by accepting as its own a mission so beautiful and so salutary, was the first to gather the fruits of it. In return for its fidelity, it should receive a new infusion of the spirit of its Institute, the same spirit which had made the first Sisters of the Order true children of the Heart of Jesus. Not that it had lost this spirit and needed reformation: in all its houses the rule was still in vigor, the holy observances maintained and respected, and if some abuses glided in, here and there, they were not of a character which the world has a right to condemn. But those unhappy days were at hand which were to see terrible trials, consequences of a spirit of pride and revolt, which caused the loss of many souls, and anticipated the irre-

des graces de nostre Sr. MM. a la Coque, me dit que cestoit une personne par qui Dieu seroit glorifie et qu'elle enseigneroit et aporteroit une devotion dans l'Eglise très profitable."

parable ruin of several great religious congregations; and without the extraordinary succor it drew from devotion to the Sacred Heart, who knows whether the Visitation would not have succumbed in its turn, and thus added a new pang to the already inexpressible anguish of the Church? This is one of the many marked features whereby the hand of Providence appears in the vocation of His servant Margaret.

But the better to penetrate these wonders of grace, it is important to view more closely the religious family in which they were accomplished. Let us, then, make acquaintance with the Mothers and Sisters of Margaret Mary, who were first her conquests and then her auxiliaries; and as her entrance into religion was the first step toward the end marked by God himself, let us glance at the general situation of the Visitation Order at that epoch; after which we shall fix our eyes on Paray-le-Monial, the theatre of the combats of this great soul, and the cradle of the devotion to the Heart of Jesus, our Lord.

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CHAPTER VI.

The Visitation Order in 1671.—Madeleine de Chaugy.—Other distinguished Sisters of Annecy.—Dijon.—Its most Distinguished Sisters.—Moulins.—Princess Mary Felicia des Ursins.—Convents in Paris.—Chaillot.—Queen Henrietta Maria.—Bossuet.—Death of Henrietta Anne of England.—James II. and Mary of Modena visit Chaillot.—Three Queens present at the Profession of Sister Angelica des Mesmes.—Sister Angelica de La Fayette attracts the notice of Louis XIII.—She reproaches him for his conduct toward Anne of Austria.—Madame de Motteville writes her Memoirs at Chaillot.—Madame de La Vallière comes there a second time, but returns to Court when she learns that she is regretted.—She finally becomes a Carmelite.—Sister Frances Patin sent with five companions to Port Royal to strive to extirpate Jansenism from that abbey.—Severe remedies necessary for this.—Louis XIV. wishes to make her Abbess.—She declines, preferring to live and die a simple Sister.—Madame de Maintenon's Letters to the Ladies of St. Louis.—Spread of the spirit of St. Francis.

In 1671, forty-nine years after the precious death of St. Francis de Sales, thirty years after that of his holy coöperatrix, Jane Francis de Chantal, and scarcely five years after the canonization of the illustrious founder had been celebrated with extraordinary joy, especially in France and Savoy, where his sweet and amiable memory still lived, Margaret Mary entered the Visitation Order.

At this moment, doubtless, the first companions of St. Chantal had already passed away, and there remained not one of those generous daughters, so strong in the sweetness of their vocation, who had borne with her

from the beginning the burden of the day and the heats; not one, I say, of those first Sisters of the Visitation, whose lives Madeleine Chaugy has retraced with an eloquent simplicity and an *abandon* full of charms.* But, beside this heroic generation and under its eyes, another generation had sprung up, which was not yet entirely extinct, and which was also favored by being permitted to contemplate the cherished features of the Holy Mother, and gather her last instructions, and, as it were, her spiritual testament, in the numerous journeys she made toward the end of her life in France and Savoy. These venerable ancients, then full of days and experience, were usually employed in the guidance of souls; one of them directed Margaret Mary in her novitiate, others were her Superiors. Their recollections were a treasure over which they watched with jealous care, and in which the whole past was retraced. In listening to them, one might, as it were, touch the cradle of the Order, and converse with its holy Founders. That indefatigable annalist Madeleine de Chaugy was still living. She had known St. Francis de Sales, and had been for ten years secretary to St. Chantal, of whom her affectionate heart inspired her to leave us such touching memorials. As each of her companions slept in the Lord, she consecrates to them some of her pages, simple monuments in which we may be sure to contemplate their true pictures. Then, though aged sixty, she had not laid aside her pen, for each day came under her observation new models worthy of companionship with the old, and thus little by little she was led to compose the "*Holy Year*

* *Vies des premières Religieuses de la Visitation Sainte Marie*, par la Reverende Mère Madeleine-Françoise de Chaugy. Paris, Julien et Lanier, 1852. This edition is enriched with an interesting notice by M. Louis Veuillot.

of the Visitation Religious;"* a vast gallery, in which are represented, by some family portrait, most of the monasteries existing at that epoch, and in which is reviewed this whole half century, so fertile in the touching and holy examples and memorials of the blessed.

The monastery of Annecy, the holy Source, as it was called, kept, with toe precious remains of the holy Founders, all the purity of their spirit, governed in these latter times by women of rare merit—Madeleine de Chaugy, Agnès Flocard, Marie-Aimée de Rabutin,† it had then for Superior, Philiberte-Emmanuele de Monthoux, a favored soul, concerning whom, a little after her death, Margaret Mary, in the monastery of Paray, was enlightened. There, too, lived—eloquent witness of the power the Blessed Francis enjoys in heaven—Mary Angelica de la Pesse, who, drawn dead from the icy waters of the river of Thioux, in which she had been for two hours, was miraculously restored to the tenderness of her mother, in recompense of a vow the latter made to the holy Bishop of Geneva.‡ There, in fine, among several great examples and dear mementoes, was formed to the religious life, of which she was one of the most accomplished models, Peronne-Rosalie Greyffié, who, as we shall subsequently see, became Superior of Margaret Mary, and displayed, in the guidance of a soul called to such extraordinary ways, a rare prudence, and a masculine firmness.

* The first volume only appeared at Annecy, 1689. It contains four months of the year. It is to a friendly communication from the Ladies of the Visitation that we are indebted for our knowledge of the existence of the two other volumes, still inedited. 1866.

† On the last two, see *Vies de plusieurs Superieures de la Visitation.* Annecy, 1693.

‡ *Vie de St. François de Sales,* par M. le Curé de St. Sulpice. This miracle is reported in the Bull of the Saint's canonization.

After Annecy, among the most illustrious houses of the Order, comes that of Dijon, so often favored with the presence of the holy Mother, sometimes brought there to fulfill her duties as mother of a family, which she so well reconciled with those of her sublime and austere vocation. There still lingered the primitive tradition as in one of its purest sanctuaries. The Annals* of the monastery of Dijon have been lately published, and whoever reads them will see how flourishing this house was in the second half of the seventeenth century. It then possessed, among other eminent souls, Frances Angelica Brulard—one of the greatest names in the parliament of Burgundy—in whom we admire chiefly an unreserved abandonment to the will of God, and an heroic confidence in Providence, of which she gave multiplied proofs, not only in Dijon, but also at Semur, Besançon and Périgueux, four monasteries which she governed in very difficult conjunctures; Anne Seraphina Boulier, a soul inundated with divine light, with the transports and the flames of a St. Teresa, and who has left us some sublime pages† on prayer, written, it may be said, with the pen of a Bossuet, and in the inimitable style of the great mystics; finally, Madeleine Joly, who was so eager to associate herself to Margaret Mary, as we shall see in its proper place. We will not omit Mother de Saumaise, who, nominated Superior of Paray-le-Monial, in 1672, discovered in the servant of God all the signs of the divine spirit, and devoted herself entirely to the triumph of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

* *Annales du Monastère de la Visitation de Dijon*, &c., by M. l'Abbé Colet, Vicar-General of Dijon, now Bishop of Luçon. Dijon, 1854.

† *Les Avis de la Mere Boulier.* This was printed immediately after the *Annals of Dijon*, but by a reserve, perhaps excessive, the copies enriched with this precious appendix have not been given to the public

Moulins, at which the holy Mother returned to God her beautiful soul, was still in possession of her heart. There also, more recently passed to a better life, after having been for her time a striking example of the fragility of human greatness, Mary Felicia des Ursins,* widow of the young and unfortunate Duke, Henry of Montmorency, who paid with his head, under Richelieu, for an error, transient indeed, but unpardonable in the eyes of the formidable minister of Louis XIII. Retired among the daughters of St. Mary, this illustrious widow had received the last sigh and the last blessing of the holy Founders. For a long time she lived only to bewail her spouse; her first inclination was to nourish and beguile her grief by raising to this dear victim a pompous mausoleum. But she finally disabused herself as to this magnificence of sorrow—another species of vanity—and no longer desired any other mourning than that of the spouses of Jesus Christ. Admitted to profession in 1658, she for several years governed the monastery which she had so long edified by her virtues. She died in 1666, leaving her daughters animated with a tender love for Jesus crucified. So when, in 1678, Mother de Saumaise, being elected Superior, arrived from Paray-le-Monial, all inflamed with the holy ardors she had drawn in her intimate and daily intercourse with Blessed Margaret, her zeal met with no resistance, and soon all hearts being conquered to the Heart of Jesus, a sweet bond was formed between the two monasteries. There, also, is born the great devotion in which Moulins glories, and which it manifests to the whole world by elevating before our eyes a vast and imposing basilica under the title of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

* *Vie de Madame la Duchesse de Montmorency*, &c., par Cotolendi Paris, 1684.

Paris in its monasteries, in which we must include those of St. Denis and of Chaillot, reunited every species of merit and of illustration. In these houses was venerated the memory of the admirable Mother Helen Angeline Lhuillier, to whom the holy Foundress addressed over three hundred letters, nearly all of consultation, so ardently did she desire, as she herself declared, to act always in concert with her.* This valiant woman died in 1654, but her works continued to praise her. She had founded eight monasteries; among which was that of Chaillot, established at the request of Henrietta Maria of France, Queen of England, who came there to seek an asylum in her grief; happy, even in her misfortunes, to see growing up, under the direction of the pious daughters of St. Francis de Sales, the amiable princess who was destined to adorn a career so brilliant but so short. On her return from England, whither she had gone in 1660 to visit her son, Charles II., re-established on a throne which then seemed so secure, Queen Henrietta remitted to the Superior of Chaillot three hundred pistoles, saying, with touching grace, "It is just, dear Mother, that you should share in the first wealth I have of my own." When she died, her heart was brought to Chaillot, and there Bossuet, inaugurating a new species of eloquence, whose grandeur had been previously unknown, and of which he possessed the secret, showed in the life of this princess, daughter, sister, wife, and mother of kings, "all the extremes of human things." The year was not ended when the other Henrietta, Madame, was struck in the splendor of her youth and beauty. In the midst of this new calamity, so unexpected, when the giant voice of Bossuet made the vaults of St. Denis resound with the

* These details are taken from *L'Année Sainte.* MS.

heart-rending cry: "Madame is dead! Madame is dead!"* nowhere was it more sorrowfully reëchoed than at Chaillot, for which the daughter had inherited all the affection her mother had long shown it.

Then, a last catastrophe having overthrown forever the throne of the Stuarts, James II. came in his turn to Chaillot, which he loved to visit, and recall one by one the lessons of exile, and refresh his soul with the remembrance of the virtues of his mother. Another queen accompanied him, in whom seemed revived Henrietta of France: pious and unfortunate as her mother-in-law, like her, too, Maria of Modena,† of the house of Esté, was endowed with remarkable greatness of soul. It is worthy of note that, of all Catholic princesses, she was the first who used her influence with the Holy See in favor of devotion to the Heart of Jesus.

Thus did the splendor of the most beautiful crowns in Europe come to be extinguished, or at least to suffer a momentary eclipse in the shade of the cloister. Sometimes three queens might be seen together at Chaillot, as at the profession of Sister Angelica de Mesmes, which was witnessed by Anne and Maria Teresa of Austria, with Henrietta Maria of France. The whole court came in their train, astonished to find beneath the veil features

* Madame. Henrietta Anne of England, Duchess of Orleans, the youngest, and, by her mother, the best beloved of the children of the unfortunate Charles I. of England and Henrietta Maria of France.—*Trans.*

† The friendship of Maria Beatrix and the nuns of Chaillot forms an interesting and beautiful episode in the annals of both parties. For fuller particulars of it, see the life of Mary Beatrice Eleonora D'Esté, by Miss Agnes Strickland, who relates that, during her exile, this young and lovely princess used often say: "If ever I become rich, the nuns of Chaillot will be the first to experience the effects of it."—*Trans.*

not unknown to them. Among the Superiors of this house, I perceive, immediately after Mother Lhuillier, Angeline de La Fayette, who used her power over the heart of Louis XIII. only to reproach him for his conduct toward the queen, his spouse, forestalling Richelieu, and sacrificing herself for the welfare of the people.* Rare example of unblemished virtue, and a reputation universally respected in the midst of such great and perilous favor. The Superior elected in 1671 was Madeleine Eugénie Bertant, sister to Madame de Motteville;† the latter was first attracted to this pious retreat by her august friend, the Queen of England; and loving it daily more and more, she wrote there the greatest part of her Memoirs. How many other illustrious souvenirs gather round this monastery! We leave them to be culled by other hands. We give one more, a coincidence between persons of the most opposite situations. The same year (1671) which saw Margaret Mary enter Paray-le-Monial, saw Madame la Vallière seek a second time in the monastery of Chaillot a refuge against her weakness. But, alas! she brought there a divided heart. It is well known that when she learned that she was regretted, she hastened to resume her chains. It was with the Carmelites that, truly penitent, she experienced some years later the unspeakable sweetness of the divine mercy.

But thanks to God, the humble daughters of St.

* The author of this history being in possession of an authentic document, coming from Mademoiselle de La Fayette, may one day throw some light on this interesting episode. See *Une Vocation et une disgrace à la cour de Louis XIII.* Paris, Brunet, 1861.

† Many of the ladies of the French court, and several of those of the exiled English court of James II., rented apartments at Chaillot and other convents. The most illustrious of the temporary lodgers at Chaillot were the wife and youngest daughter of Charles I., and the wife and youngest child of James II.—*Trans.*

Francis were not always surrounded by princesses and great ladies—a dangerous proximity for the delicate virtues that flourish only on Calvary, and beneath the shadow of the Cross. Indeed, they themselves preserved good order, not only by receiving maidens of humble rank, called, like others, to the first offices of the Order when they were judged worthy of it, but also by managing certain establishments devoted by their very nature to profound obscurity, and in which their love of abjection could be fully satiated. Such, among others, was the House of St. Magdalen, founded by Mother Lhuillier, as a refuge for poor penitents. Mother Anne Mary Bolain, a venerable Religious, who had the double privilege of receiving the habit from St. Francis de Sales, and living for a long time under the direction of St. Vincent de Paul, spent there thirty consecutive years; after which, well shielded, it would seem, against vainglory, she came, at the age of seventy-four years, to take the place of Superior at Chaillot, vacant by the death of Angelique de La Fayette, 1665. It was Mother Bolain who, in 1670, received the heart of the Queen of England, and did the honors of her *little chapel** to Monsieur, the king's brother, to Madame, to Mademoiselle, to all the élite of the court, who pressed round the pulpit of Bossuet, who preached the funeral oration of Henrietta Maria.

Others were employed to found congregations, to direct novitiates, to reform monasteries. At Caen, the venerable Father Eudes wished to place his daughters of Our Lady of Charity under the direction of Mother Frances Margaret Patin, 1644. At Paris, when it was

* *Petite Chapelle* is the expression she uses in the circular letter she addressed on this occasion to the other monasteries of the Order.

determined to extirpate the Jansenist heresy in the Abbey of Port Royal, Mother Eugénie de Fontaine, of the monastery of La rue St. Antoine, received orders to repair thither with five of her companions; a work far more laborious and more difficult than the direction of the House of St. Magdalen; for the poor penitents, humbled by the depth of their fall, had repented, while it was far otherwise with the ladies of Port Royal, of whom their Archbishop, Hardouin de Perefixe, remarked, that *if they were pure as angels*, they were not the less *proud as devils.* Hence, notwithstanding her consummate prudence and unalterable meekness, put to many rude trials, Mother de Fontaine could attract but a small number of these headstrong, rebellious spirits; and it was only when the most refractory were separated from the rest, that she was able to root out of this house the venom of heresy. Louis XIV. wished to make her abbess, but, unwilling to accept that dignity, she returned to die a simple Sister in her monastery of La rue de St. Antoine.*

A little later, when Madame de Maintenon founded the Ladies of St. Louis, it was to the Daughters of St. Mary that she had recourse to form them to the religious life, and Mother de Priolo was obliged to leave Chaillot with some companions to govern St. Cyr. After their departure, Madame de Maintenon wrote to the Ladies of St. Louis:—"Do not amuse yourselves as much, my dear children, in regretting your mothers as in profiting well of all they have said and done at St. Cyr. I shall be filled with joy if I see you replenished with the spirit of these dear daughters of St. Francis de Sales. Assuredly nothing better can be desired for you. The king has ex-

* *Vie de la Mère Louise-Eugénie de Fontaine*, &c., written by a lady of quality. Paris, 1695. The writer is Jacqueline Marie du Plessis, Lady Bonneau.

pressed this very sentiment even more strongly than I have done."

Thus spread far and near, in the court and in the great world, in religious communities and in Christian families, this spirit of sweetness and benignity, of support of the neighbor, of patience, of ardent universal charity which are so properly attached to the name of St. Francis de Sales, but which, to speak correctly, are but the spirit of the Heart of Jesus, only source of life for all the faithful. And it was because the Visitation should possess the plenitude of this spirit that its holy projector saw there, "a sacred fountain whence many drew the waters of salvation." Hence, he feared not to assign to his dear daughters a vocation, in some manner apostolic, speaking to them in this manner:

"The Apostles were sent over the whole earth to continue what the Saviour of the world commenced when He gave His life for men, and *not only life, but life in the best and most abundant manner.* In like manner, my dear daughters, are you destined (as sharers in the apostolic spirit) to go here and there, in divers places, to give to many souls the knowledge of the perfection of the Gospel comprised in your Institute: and if, because of your sex, you cannot have the dignity of the apostleship, you have the office of it; for, without remitting sins, you give life, and life most abundantly, since there are many persons who withdraw from the world after your example, and who otherwise had been lost to heaven amid its snares and vanities."*

The best commentary on these words is, as we shall see, the history of the monastery in which lived Margaret Mary. But, before quitting Paris, let us remark that

* *Abrégé de l'Esprit interieure des Religieuses de la Visitation*, ch. v.

Paray, which we have never lost sight of, owed to it Mother Jeronyme Hersant, who, governing this house in 1671, received among her daughters Margaret Mary, an unknown treasure, of which she soon learned the value. Like Anne Marie Bolain, who divided the labors of the refuge of St. Magdalen, like Angelique de La Fayette, like Eugénie de Fontaine, and so many other Religious of eminent virtue and distinguished merit, Mother Hersant was professed in the monastery of La rue de St. Antoine, and belonged to the great school of the celebrated Mother Helena Angelica Lhuillier.

Thus Paris by Mother Hersant, Dijon by Mother de Saumaise, Annecy by Mother Greyffié, were successively represented at Paray-le-Monial, at the epoch in which Margaret lived there; as if, in forming bonds so strict between this humble monastery and the most considerable in the Order, God wished in some manner to enlarge the sphere in which His servant was to labor for His glory, and to inflame all hearts with the lively and fruitful ardors of celestial love.

CHAPTER VII

In sixty-one Years the Visitation Order numbers thirty-nine Houses.—State of Religion at Paray-le-Monial.—Father de Barry.—He proposes the establishment of a Convent.—Visitation Order selected.—Father de Finières.—Mother de Blonay.—Mary A. Rosselin.—Foundation of Paray.—Visit of St. Jane Frances and her Daughter.—Early Days at Paray.—Touching Incidents.—The Plague, 1628.—The Families of Chateaumorand, Amanzi, Coligny, Vichy-Chamron.

Founded in 1626, the Monastery of Paray was already numbered among the most ancient establishments of an Order* then spread from one extremity to the other of Catholic Europe. Naturally, this great propagation was most rapid in the happy countries situated between Dijon and Annecy, on the route so often travelled by the holy Mother. Wherever she set her foot, vocations were rife, and communities sprang from the earth. Yet little could it be expected that the small town of Paray, a prey to the ravages of heresy, should long be deprived of a help so necessary to reanimate in the hearts of its inhabitants the languishing faith.

There, it is true, the Huguenots did not become masters of the country, and if, at the epoch of the first religious wars, they had laid their base hands on churches and convents, all had not perished in this great disaster.

* In 1671, the Order counted thirty-nine houses, of which six were in the diocese of Autun, namely: Moulins, founded 1617; Autun, 1624; Paray-le-Monial, 1626; Semur, 1633; Charolles, 1638; Avallon, 1646.

The imposing basilica of *Our Lady*, of such beautiful and noble architecture, was still standing, and the faithful assembled there as heretofore. In its shade, the children of St. Bennet practised in peace the observances of their rule, in a priory placed for ages under the powerful guardianship of Cluny, and still in possession of most of its ancient rights. The Abbot of Cluny—too often an abbot commendatory—came from time to time to reside at Paray, of which he was lord. In fine, the parochial Church of St. Nicholas was served by clergy sufficiently numerous, whom pious foundations had placed above want, without exposing them to the danger of opulence. It cannot, therefore, be said that the Catholics were entirely defenceless in the incursions of the innovators.

But at this time Calvinism, too much inflated with success to foresee the severe lesson given it some years later at Rochelle (1628), marched everywhere with head erect. The ministers had preserved at Paray their meeting-house, more frequented than the church, and such was the spread of their doctrines, that the town scarcely contained a dozen Catholic families. And in these families, what indifference! what torpor! A single fact will be sufficiently eloquent of this: During the memory of man, not a lady of Paray had been known to take the veil in any monastery!*

The imminent loss of so many souls moved to compassion a pious and noble lady, Hippolyta de Gondi, marchioness of Ragny, whose husband was governor of Charolais. By her care, a Catholic mission was founded in 1617, and confided to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, some of whom came to reside at Paray. God

* All we have said of the foundation of Paray is taken from an inedited document, entitled, *The Establishment of the Monastery of the Visitation at Paray*, September 4, 1626.

blessing their labors, by little and little the stray sheep were seen to return to the sheepfold.

Now, there was among the Jesuits one of those men, powerful in works and in words, whom God in His great mercy sometimes sends to His people. Paul de Barry*—this was his name—held a distinguished rank among the theologians of his Order; a preacher full of fire, he subjugated hearts rather by the power of his virtues than the charm of his eloquence; copious and piquant in style, his writings, though inferior in merit, have a sort of family resemblance to those of St. Francis de Sales. How tender was his piety may be seen by the fact that the venerable Father Eudes, of holy memory, judged him worthy to figure among the twelve Fathers of the Society of Jesus, who, in his eyes, merited the name of *Apostles of the Heart of Mary.*

This holy man, then, when he contemplated this pretty little town, situated on the banks of the Bourbince, in the midst of a smiling valley, whose fertility formerly caused it to be styled Orval, or vale of gold, could not help feeling sad when he thought of the miserable state of the inhabitants perishing for want of spiritual nourishment, living only on *the fat of the earth.* Willing or unwilling, he must lead or force them to better things. After the Lent of 1826, which he preached entirely, with extraordinary success, he reconciled to God many heretics and bad Catholics, receiving at all hands the most touching marks of veneration and public confidence. Already several pious persons had begun to confide to him their attraction for a more perfect life, adding that

* The best known of his writings are, *La Solitude du Philagie*, and *La Devotion à Saint Joseph.* These have been translated into various languages. See *la Bibliothèque des Ecrivains de la Companie de Jésus*, par les PP. Augustin et Aloïs de Becker. 1re série.

they would gladly sequester themselves from the world and its dangers, if they knew of any secure asylum. Taking advantage of these overtures, one day, at the end of a sermon, he remarked to the auditors that their town, though small, was assuredly one of the most agreeable he had ever lived in, but that it wanted an essential ornament, namely, a convent, which might receive such of their daughters as wished to become religious, and in which their little girls should be educated in the fear and love of God. He then touchingly expatiated on the advantages a city can not fail to receive from the salutary examples and continual prayers of a fervent community of religious ladies.

These words went to the hearts of the honest inhabitants of Paray, and, with common consent, they confided to the Father the execution of this pious design, leaving entirely to him the choice of the Order. Father Barry hastened to impart this happy resolution to the Marchioness of Ragny, who immediately promised her support, adding that, as she was about to return to court, he might count on her, disposed as she was to protect all the Religious who might be selected for the proposed convent.

Father Finières, who was then at Paray, and whose heart was still embalmed with the virtues he had seen St. Francis de Sales practise on the bed of death, was particularly attached to the daughters of the holy Prelate, whose maxims he keenly relished. Moreover, having assisted at the foundation of their monastery of Evian, in Savoy, he had had an opportunity of admiring more closely their sweetness, humility, simplicity, and spirit of poverty. He spoke of all this to Father Barry, whose waverings he had not much difficulty in settling. The latter then proposed to the principal citizens the Religious of this Institute, saying that "they were Daughters of St.

Mary, founded by the illustrious Francis de Sales, who was in heaven these four years, in quality of Apostle of Chablais, where he had converted a great number of Calvinists; that his daughters had inherited his zeal and sustained his work by receiving among them maidens who wished to abjure the heresy of Calvin." Prophetic words, observes the pious chronicler, for, during most of a century, as pensioners or Religious there were always some converts in the monastery of Paray.

Father Barry added that, being acquainted with Mother de Blonay, Superior of the first monastery of Lyons in Bellecour, he felt sure of obtaining from her some Religious. Ravished with joy, the people replied:—"Father, bring them here instantly; we will regard them as the morning star which announces the coming of day."

When the letters from Father Barry and the Marchioness of Ragny arrived, the pious Superior was at prayer, at that very time, repassing in her mind, before God, some words she had heard the Blessed Father say: "That it were to be wished, that in every city in the world there was a monastery of the Visitation, to serve as a refuge to maids and widows of good heart and delicate constitution."* With this high recommendation, the little town of Paray was not likely to be refused by Mother de Blonay.

But before coming to a conclusion, how many authorizations were necessary! On the one hand, Mother de Chantal, the Cardinal de Marquemont, Archbishop of Lyons, then at the court of Rome, the Count de Lafaye,† spiritual Father of the monastery of Bellecour, who was at Paris; on the other, Dom. d'Arbouzé, Abbot of Cluny,

* *La Vie de la Mère de Blonay.* By M. Charles Augustus de Sales. Paris, 1655.

† Probably a canon of Lyons.

Dean and Prior of Paray, and M. Claude de Ragny, Bishop of Autun: all these worthy people must give their consent. While they were debating it, Madame de Blonay, persuaded there could not be too much light, consulted several pious persons, among others Father Fourrier, Provincial of the Jesuits, formerly spiritual Father to St. Francis de Sales, who speaks of him in the preface of the *Introduction to a Devout Life*, and the good lay Brother, Anthelme Antony, a great servant of God. Both urged her to send without delay this foundation, which, said the latter, will be greatly tried, but which will ultimately tend much to the glory of the Lord Jesus, and of His Holy Mother Mary.

This delay was turned to account by Father Barry. He disposed all things at Paray, and even journeyed to Lyons to smooth away the difficulties by treating with Mother de Blonay. A letter which reached him on his return, filled him with joy. It was from one of his spiritual daughters, Mademoiselle Rosselin, a young lady belonging to one of the most considerable families in Paray. As she was for some time at Lyons, with one of her aunts, she had much facility for instructing herself in the kind of life practised at the Visitation, and having well examined all before God, she decided on entering the monastery of Bellecour. She entered July 20, 1626, despite the tender remonstrances of her parents, and was thenceforth regarded by Father Barry as the first stone of the edifice he designed to raise to the greater glory of God at Paray.

Finally, all obstacles surmounted, the authorizations obtained, a house—inconvenient enough—was transformed into a monastery, and the little colony set out from Lyons. It was composed of Sisters Margaret Elizabeth Sansion, Superior; Mary Margaret Fontanay, assistant;

Jane Frances Pétrin, Mary Angela Martin, Mary Constance de Bourcelot, and the new novice, Mary Aimée Rosselin. As lay Sister, went Sister Anne Cecilia Defondsauvage, a humble soul, who is mentioned in the account of the death of St. Francis de Sales. As she assisted at his last moments—being then only portress—she imagined she could rouse him from his stupor by telling him that Mother de Chantal and his brother, the Bishop of Chalcedon, had come. But the saint soon saw through this little ruse, and said: "My Sister, we must not tell a lie under any pretext whatever."

At their arrival, a sweet joy spread through the town. All surrounded them, eager to see Sister Rosselin. "And as she was the first lady of Paray that, as far as they knew, had ever become a Religious, the people believed she would surely become a saint, and in this pious belief several of them knelt down to receive her benediction, which confused the dear novice so much, that she wished herself far from all her acquaintances, in the monastery of Bellecour, where she had received the veil. But cloister being established some days after, she again experienced her usual peace of soul."

Next day, high mass was celebrated in the chapel of the monastery, where the Blessed Sacrament was henceforth preserved. "Rev. Father Barry preached that day, with a joy hardly to be surpassed at seeing his wishes fulfilled, to the greater glory of God and the satisfaction of his auditors. So full of joy was this good Father, that though since his return from Lyons he had been suffering from an intermittent fever, and that this was the day for its return, he determined, nevertheless, to ascend the pulpit. The holy fire of divine love which animated him drove off the heats and colds of the fever, which entirely

left him, and this he regarded as a particular favor from heaven."

Sister Rosselin soon had a companion, like herself, a native of Paray. One of the most honorable men in the town, M. Thouvant, who had used all his influence for the establishment of the monastery, was eager to see in it one of his daughters. He had several, but not one of them had the least idea of the religious life. He engaged them, therefore, to draw lots among themselves, beseeching God to direct the choice. The lot falling upon Anne Frances, the youngest, she was so delighted with the beautiful destiny chosen for her, that she soon after entered the monastery, so that she was the first to receive there the holy habit. With what fervor did not she and Sister Rosselin pass their novitiate! They desired, says the annalist, "that all whom they loved most dearly in the world should come to taste with them the gentle and spiritual sweetness of the house of God."

It was reserved for Mother Anne Frances Thouvant to see, in her old age, the arrival of Margaret Mary, the first steps of whom she directed in the paths of religious perfection.

A month after the foundation, Mother de Chantal visited Paray. She was accompanied by her daughter, Madame de Toulongeon, who had permission to enter the monastery with her. But the door being opened, the holy Mother paused on the threshold, saying to her daughter: "Frances, wait until I learn if the Mother of this house is satisfied that you should enter her convent." And the Superior having come, she said to her: "My dear sister, here is my daughter who has leave to enter, but I do not wish her to do so without your consent." Every one admired the profound humility of the holy

Foundress, who used so little authority in the houses of her Order.

There is a great charm in the recital, traced by contemporary pens, of these first years, in which God so many times made His servants feel that they risked nothing in quitting all for Him, and committing themselves unreservedly to His maternal Providence. Nothing is wanting of that which contributes to render so instructive, and so attractive the history of rising orders and religious foundations: trials, contradiction on the part of men, extreme penury as regards earthly things, even the necessaries of life; difficulties and labors of every species; but in return, by one of those admirable compensations Our Lord Himself has guaranteed to those who follow Him—great spiritual joy, abundance of heavenly consolation, union of hearts which recalls the beautiful days of the primitive Church—all that the Apostle, in one word, has so well named *the first fruits of the Spirit*, without even excepting that simple and humble faith, which is so powerful over the heart of God, that he is pleased to recompense it by miracles.

Of this, the sweet Sister Anne Mary Mottin, a native of Charolles, had experience. While yet a postulante, she was cured of a disease which would have been an obstacle to her profession, by the application of a cloth tinged with the blood of St. Francis de Sales; a favor which so increased her confidence in him, that she invoked him on every occasion. One day, among others, in drawing water, she let fall into the well a little book, in which she had copied for her own use the whole directory. Greatly afflicted, she exclaimed: "My Blessed Father, you have ordained us this holy exercise; I beseech you, in all humility, to restore it to me." Three days after, being occupied in the same work, and still

thinking of her lost manuscript, she was greatly astonished to see it come up in her pitcher, as dry as if it had never been in the water. This was regarded as miraculous, adds the annalist, with simplicity.

But never was the tender solicitude of Providence for the rising community more touchingly manifested than amid the ravages of the plague, which burst upon Paray early in 1628.

While most of the inhabitants fled to the country in search of more salubrious air, the worthy daughters of St. Francis, braving the terrible scourge, resolved to suffer all rather than violate their beloved inclosure. Four of them were attacked with the epidemic, and it was necessary to separate these from the rest. A habitation contiguous to that in which dwelt the community served as a hospital, and a fifth Sister was deputed to nurse the invalids;—not one of the five succumbed. However, such was the apprehension spread abroad, that both those in the monastery and those shut up in the hospital were threatened with want of water and other necessaries, no one being anxious to hold any communication with the messengers of the plague-stricken convent; their wells were in such a state that they had long since ceased to use them; their muddy fountain, the old proprietor of the place had described as a *miry little sewer*. But the water of the wells cleared of itself; the *little sewer* became a fountain of sparkling waters, which dried up only when the plague had ceased. Even a ruinous oven, in which the Sisters used to bake their bread, was providentially hindered from falling till it was no longer of use to the community of St. Mary.

Finally, Superiors having interposed their authority to decide that these intrepid women should fly the contagion, crucifix in hand they left their monastery proces-

sionally, under the escort of their confessor, and retired to a country house, in which they became the recipients of M. Rosselin's generous hospitality. There, assembled in a high tower as in a cenacle, they chanted hymns and spiritual canticles, and tasted the sweetness of the heavenly consolations with which the Lord was well pleased to inundate them in these days of universal distress. Five months after, the pestilence having ceased, they returned, sound and healthy, to their dear cloister, hearing on all sides, during their journey, the benedictions of the unfortunate with whom, at the height of the plague, they had shared their feeble resources for God's sake.

Such were the beginnings of the Visitation in Paray-le-Monial. This sweet apparition of the religious life, till then unknown, touched all hearts. From the town and its environs several persons, animated with a great desire of perfection, came to solicit admission to the monastery, and this district, whose great spiritual barrenness had heretofore afflicted the hearts of apostolic men, was not slow to become one of the most flourishing portions of the heritage of Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

On some privileged families, eager to respond to the divine call, the grace of vocation fell with marvelous profusion. Such was, among others, that of the generous Sister Rosselin, who had not waited to join the Daughters of St. Mary till they should be settled at Paray; and when, forty years later, Margaret Mary was, in her turn, received as a postulante, she found among the professed a Sister Emerentiana Rosselin, the sixth, but not the last of that name, to wear the habit of St. Mary.

The community then occupied a house perfectly suited to its wants, with a covered chapel on the street, easy of access to the public; in the rear was a vast inclosure,

half gardens, half meadows, stretching to the ramparts of the town. It contained thirty choir Sisters, eight lay Sisters, and three novices. Most of these Religious belonged by birth to the better class of the townspeople, or to the gentry of the country. Some, as Antoinette de Lévis-Chateaumorand* and Claudia de Coligny, bore names among the most distinguished in France. We remark also among them, some years later, seven or eight Sisters of the names of Amanzé and Vichy-Chamron, two ancient families of Burgundy, whom a recent alliance had intimately united, and whose chiefs fulfilled in that Province important offices.

* The Lévis-Chateaumorand are doubtless less celebrated than the Lévis-Mirepoix and the Lévis-Ventadour; nevertheless they also belong to the great and ancient house of Lévis or Levi, which exaggerates somewhat its antiquity in claiming for its ancestor a son of Jacob, but which was really descended from nobles already considerable in the ninth century. Mother de Lévis-Chateaumorand was elected to govern the monastery in 1690, some months before the death of Margaret, whose fifth and last Superior she was. She herself died in 1694. Sister Claude de Coligny was daughter of Gaspard II. of Coligny, count of Saligny, governor of Autun, and bailiwick of Charolois. Of her two brothers, Gaspard III. and John, the latter is much the more celebrated. He was that brilliant Count de Coligny whom Louis XIV. sent in 1664, at the head of 6,000 men, to the assistance of the emperor, then at war with the Turks, and who covered himself with glory on the days of Kermen and St. Gothard. Entirely devoted to the great Condé, even after the last disasters of the Fronde, he sacrificed to this illustrious friendship the hand of Hortense Mancini,† which Mazarin offered him, and which, on his refusal, made of La Meilleraie the richest lord in the kingdom.

† Hortense Mancini, one of the beautiful historic nieces of Mazarin, was sought in marriage by James Stuart, Duke of York, heir-presumptive of the crown of England. [*Trans.*] The Count d'Amanzé was lieutenant of the king for the province of Burgundy, and the Count de Vichy-Chamron, his son-in-law, governor of Bourbon Lancy.

But these names, noble though they be, were eclipsed by that of the humble maiden of Versovre, and indeed, apart from the interest that surrounds all connected with so holy a memory, who would think of rescuing them from oblivion?

She found, as we have said, at the head of the monastery, Mother Jéronyme Hersant, a professed Sister of the first house at Paris, who was then finishing her sixth year of office. Mother Hersant was meekness and humility personified. If she saw any of her daughters sad, the following night she interrupted her repose to solace this poor heart, to win its filial confidence, and thereby be enabled to pour balm into its wounds. The mistress of novices was Anne Frances Thouvant, the first that had taken the habit at Paray, on which occasion the whole city thronged to the convent, attracted by the novelty of this pious spectacle. Sister Thouvant had been forty-four years professed when Margaret Mary was placed under her direction.

Never had any lady so eagerly desired to enter this monastery, but as she knocked at the door* she experienced a terrible assault, and, as it were, a complete shuddering of nature, bewildered at the sight of so great and so entire a sacrifice. "It seemed to me," said she, "that my soul was about to be severed from my body." Despising these vain terrors, she entered, and immediately her soul is inundated with celestial sweetness; she goes about exclaiming with the Prophet: *The Lord hath broken the bonds of my captivity. He hath clothed me with the garment of praise. It is here He willeth me to dwell. This is my rest forever, for I have chosen it.*

* May 25, 1671, was the day Blessed Margaret Mary entered the convent.

CHAPTER VIII.

Margaret Mary in the Novitiate.—Her Mistress.—St. Francis de Sales appears to the Postulante.— Her Reception. — Uneasiness of her Superiors concerning Her.—Her Rhymes.—Her Repugnance to Cheese.—She gets Charge of an Ass and a Foal.—Her Fatigues in this Occupation.—The Animals insist in running in Opposite Directions. — The Kitchen Garden. — Her Retreat and Profession.— Supernatural Favors.

1671–1672.

Behold Margaret Mary in the sweet and strong school of St. Francis de Sales; behold her among the novices whom he recommends to be exercised "in humility, obedience, meekness, and modesty, that their fortitude be increased; that the fastidiousness, over-niceties, and childish humors so calculated to render the mind weak and nerveless, especially in the female sex, should as far as possible be rooted out that like valiant women they should perform the works of strong and solid perfection."*

How great her courage already was, appeared on occasions: in entering the novitiate she esteemed herself the last of all, and submitted with much simplicity to the smallest observances of rule, avoiding making herself remarkable in any thing, and abandoning herself to the guidance of her charitable directress, Sister Anne Frances Thouvant.

* Constitution XXIII. of the Directress.

Our Lord made her see then, more closely than ever, the sweetness attached to His service. Each morning as she awoke, she heard some mysterious words pronounced —generally a verse of the psalms in Latin—as, *Dilexisti justitiam*, &c., *Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity, therefore God hath anointed thee ;* or: *Audi, filia, et vide*, &c., *Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear;* and the novice, not understanding Latin, sought an explanation of them from her good, dear mistress, whom, according to her own energetic expression, she regarded as *her Jesus on earth.**

As she hungered and thirsted for prayer, and imagined that she knew nothing of this holy exercise, her first care was to beseech her mistress to teach her how to pray. To indicate to her a method well calculated to initiate her in the science of the saints, had been easy to Mother Thouvant, who had in her possession the *Introduction to a Devout Life ;* † but, either because she wished to try her, or rather because she thought the Holy Ghost Himself ought to be the sole Master of one to whom He communicated Himself so familiarly, she contented herself with saying, "Go, place yourself before Our Lord, as canvas before the painter." What did these words signify? Margaret Mary herself did not at first comprehend. Yet she went, and in silence prostrated herself before the Blessed Sacrament, and there, while reflecting on what she had been told to do, she heard her Beloved say: "Come, I will teach thee." And immediately He deigned to explain to her, that this canvas was her soul, upon which He wished to depict all the features of His suffering life, after having purified her of all the stains

* *Mon Jésus en terre.*

† See particularly *La Briefve Méthode pour la Meditation*, Part II., ch. 11. This is a treasure for beginners.

contracted through affection to creatures, and by self-love. At the same moment she realized within herself an admirable change; Our Lord despoiled her of the remnants of corrupt nature, emptying her heart, making her soul as it were naked; after which He inspired her with a desire to love and suffer, which was so intense that it left her no repose, and she could no longer think of any thing else. Only the salutary bridle of obedience could restrain this thirst for suffering. It cost her much to master the vehemence of her desires. If she sought, with a holy passion, occasions of dying to herself, she seldom did any thing without the consent of her mistress. Once, indeed, yielding to indiscreet fervor, she inflicted on herself some corporal mortification, for which she was severely reproved by the holy Founder of the Visitation, who said: "What! my child, do you think to please God by passing the limits of obedience? Remember that obedience, not austerity, is the foundation of our Congregation." She imprinted on her heart this advice, so conformable to the oracle of the Holy Ghost: *Obedience is better than victims.*

Three months after her entrance, she was allowed to receive the holy habit. This was on the Feast of St. Louis (Aug. 25, 1671), a blessed day to which she thus alludes in her memoirs:

"Our Lord showed me that this was the day of our spiritual betrothal, which gave Him new power over me, and imposed on me a double engagement of loving Him with the love of preference. After this, He made me comprehend that, like a passionate lover, He wished me to taste in these beginnings, all that was most delightful in the sweetness of His love."

He then invited her to make a solitude in her heart, where He would come to visit her and teach her to love

Him. She passed there with Him, in sweet conversation, all the time at her disposal. The Divine caresses were so excessive that they sometimes carried her, as it were, out of herself, and rendered her almost incapable of exterior action. This was a subject of such strange confusion to her, that she strove to hide herself, fearing lest she should involuntarily betray to her Sisters what was passing in her soul. Then, suddenly, she was entirely deprived of these extraordinary sentiments of love and tenderness; and from the abundance of these celestial consolations, she fell into such an impotence that she was no longer able even to keep herself in the presence of God. She complained amorously to Him of these sudden changes which clouded her soul; but He made her see that her inquietude sprang from a dangerous curiosity, and that when He fixed His dwelling in a soul, He required a "mind without self-judgment, an understanding without curiosity, a judgment without self-will, and a heart ambitious of no other movements than those of love." — "If I will have thee in My presence," He added, "deaf, blind, and dumb, oughtest thou not to be content?"

Seeing evidence of these extraordinary things, so little compatible, as they imagined, with the simple and uniform devotion St. Francis de Sales so highly recommended to his children, her Superiors became very uneasy. They resolved to try her, and in order to learn whether her obedience was equal to the supernatural gifts that appeared in her, they informed her that this sublime prayer ill suited a Daughter of St. Mary, and that if she persisted therein they could not receive her to profession.

The humble novice strove to obey, but she could ill resist the action of God, who absorbed all her powers. They multiplied her trials. Being made assistant to a

Sister who had one of the busiest offices in the house, and who was charged to make her work incessantly, especially during the time of prayer; scarcely had she heard the subject of meditation read in community, than she was sent out of the choir to take her broom and sweep the house. Thus occupied from morning till night, each day, she had to render an account to her mistress of the manner in which she prayed during work, and the fruit she had drawn from this holy exercise. In the midst of these rebukes, Our Lord overwhelmed her with his sweet caresses, and she gave expression to her joy in a kind of poetry without art, but not without charm, which she wrote with great facility:—

The more my love they thwart,
The more it burns my heart:
Afflicted day and night,
My Jesus is my light!
O Love! how rich my gain!
With anguish and with pain
I buy a pleasure,
I win a treasure!
Blest be the cross that Thou hast given,
Thy love, O Jesus! makes it heaven!

The more they contradict my love,
The more this Only Good inflames me—
The more I sigh towards God above,
The less my weary troubles pain me.
Whatever sorrows I endure,
They make me love my Jesus more!*

* The lines, for which the courteous reader will be good enough to accept either of the above translations, are: (Bishop Languet styles them *uncouth*.)

"Plus l'on contredit mon amour,
Plus cet unique bien m'enflamme.
Que l'on m'afflige nuit et jour,
On ne peut l'ôter à mon ame.
Oui, plus je souffre de douleur,
Plus mon Dieu s'unit à mon cœur."

Sometimes, harassed in a thousand ways, she heaved toward her Divine Spouse a cry of distress: "Alas," she cried, "come to me, Thou who art the cause of my anguish."—"Acknowledge," He replied, "that without Me thou canst do nothing; never will I fail thee, provided that, lost in the sentiment of thy nothingness, thou leanest upon My strength."

She used to say that, the smaller the humiliations appeared, the more sensible they were to nature. Behold how she experienced this during her novitiate. One of the viands most frequently served on the humble table of the monastery was cheese, for which she had an hereditary repugnance so invincible, that at the request of her brother the Mother Superior had promised never to constrain her on this point; yet, as she was sometimes taunted for this singularity, one day, when a piece of cheese was by mistake left before her, she thought it was done designedly, and, believing herself obliged to obey, she attempted to eat it. Vain efforts! her heart failed her, and she was on the point of fainting away in the arms of the Sisters who ran to her assistance.

The mistress had observed all, not without secret admiration; but, wishing to prove her humility, she reproached her with having through pride undertaken to vanquish herself, and having yielded through want of courage; and then forbade her in future to undertake such practices without leave. For herself, she in good faith reproached herself with cowardice. "Alas, Lord," she cried, "ought there then to be any reserve in my sacrifice?" After three days passed in prayers and tears, she said to herself: "To conquer or to die," and she went to cast herself at the feet of the Directress, who permitted her to accomplish her generous resolution. This time the victory was complete, but God knew at what

price; she continued faint the whole day, and experienced at intervals violent pains. Next day, and the following day, new combats and new victories, always as dearly purchased as the first; this was renewed not only during some weeks, but during the space of eight years; when her Superiors, though rather late, perhaps, fearing that such violent efforts might be injurious to her health, desired her to refrain from combating this obstinate antipathy.

Aversions or attractions, all were for her matter for new struggles; thus a young Sister endowed with excellent dispositions to virtue having inspired her with a tender affection, perfectly innocent, but a little too natural, Our Lord interiorly reproached her for this, and declared that He would not dwell in a divided heart. She resolved to vanquish it, but she did not do so without difficulty, and it cost her, too, not less than three months, so susceptible was her heart to the charms of friendship. But she was rewarded for her fidelity in submitting to the least movements of her Celestial Spouse. So great was the sweetness with which He flooded her soul, that she was constrained to exclaim: "Suspend, O Lord, the torrents that overwhelm me, or increase my capacity to receive them."

As the time of her profession approached, her Superiors, still diffident as to the extraordinary ways by which God conducted her, hesitated to recognize her vocation. Of this she thus amorously complained to her Beloved: "Alas, my Lord, wilt thou be the cause of my being sent away?" Whereupon He replied: "Tell thy Superior she has nothing to fear in receiving thee, and that if she consider My guarantee sufficient, I will be thy caution." The novice related these words to the Superior, who said: "Well, then, as a proof of His promise, ask Our

Lord to make you useful to the community by enabling you to practise all its observances." The Sister repeated this message to Our Lord, who responded: "I will grant thee all that, for I will make thee more useful to thy community than they think, but in a manner known only to Myself. I will adjust My favors to the spirit of thy rule, the will of thy Superiors, and thy own weakness. Thou must be ever suspicious of whatever draws thee from the exact observance of thy rule; it is My will that thou shouldst prefer it before all else. Moreover, I am satisfied that thou shouldst prefer the will of thy Superiors to Mine, when they forbid thee to do what I shall have ordered thee. Permit them to do with thee whatever they will; I shall know how to make My designs succeed by means which seem contrary to them. I reserve to Myself the guidance of thy interior, and particularly of thy heart. I have established there My empire, and I will never yield it to any other."

These words, and the effects which followed them, completely reassured the Superiors. How is it possible that all their difficulties were not vanquished by her obedience, at once so simple and so courageous, which never had failed either in little things or in great? Behold a trait of most charming simplicity, which was, for the whole community, a new subject of edification, and for herself a source of abundant grace with which our Lord was pleased to reward her fidelity to Him.

A sick Sister having been ordered to take asses' milk, an ass and her foal were kept in the meadow, and as it was feared that these beasts might stray into the kitchen garden, the novices were requested to watch them. Margaret Mary took to herself this obedience. She was obliged to run from morning till night, now after the

ass, now after the foal, both of which had a very strong liking for the fresh herbs of the garden.

The epoch of her retreat arrived—the last preparation for her solemn profession. Whatever her attraction for prayer might be, she did not think herself excused from watching over the refractory beasts, which continued, as before, to cast very longing looks at the herbs and pulse of the vegetable garden. The place is still shown where she kept her solitary look-out, at the foot of some large hazel-trees, whose giant branches, forming as it were a cradle, shade one of the avenues of the garden.

But, occupied as she was with this humble charge, she ceased not to converse with God, saying with simplicity: "If Saul, in seeking his father's asses, found the kingdom of Israel, why should I not obtain the Kingdom of Heaven while running after similar animals?" And Our Lord was not absent from her while she fulfilled this troublesome charge. Being desired to give an account of her dispositions during this time, she said: "I was as happy and consoled in this occupation as if I had been all day before the Blessed Sacrament. My sovereign Master enlightened me as to the mystery of His Passion and Death, but this is an abyss which I am powerless to fathom. This has given me such excessive love for the cross, that I cannot live a moment without suffering, and suffering in silence, without consolation, support, or compassion from any one. Happy if I could die with this God of my soul, crushed beneath the cross of opprobrium, humiliation, sorrow, contempt, and oblivion! In the evening, though greatly wearied by so much running, I enjoyed so much peace that my only uneasiness arose from the fear that I did not love God sufficiently, and all night I was agitated with this thought. One evening, not being able to sleep (for she already endured in silence

great infirmities), and wishing to relieve myself by turning on my side, my Divine Master said to me: 'When I carried My cross, I did not change from one side to the other to ease My pain.' "

On All Souls' Day, 1672, as she offered herself as a holocaust in union with Jesus Christ, He said to her: "Remember, it is a crucified God thou desirest to espouse; therefore thou must conform thyself to Him by bidding adieu to all the pleasures of life; for henceforth there will be none for thee, but what will be traversed with My cross." He then placed before her eyes His Holy Humanity fastened to the cross for the salvation of all men, and He desired her, from that time, to attach herself to the Cross He had prepared for her. "It will be so painful," He added, "that wert thou not supported by My omnipotent arm, it would be impossible for thee not to sink under it."

During her retreat, our Lord said to her: "Behold the wound in My side, in which thou mayest make thy dwelling now and forever: there wilt thou be able to preserve the robe of innocence with which I have clothed thy soul. Henceforth thou shalt live, as it were, the life of a Man-God; thou shalt live no longer as having life, that I may perfectly live in thee. Beware of considering thyself as outside of Me."

After hearing these words from the mouth of Jesus Christ, she wrote with her own blood:

"I, a poor, miserable nothing, vow to God to submit and sacrifice myself to whatever He desires of me, immolating my heart to the accomplishment of His good pleasure, without any condition but that of His greater glory, and His pure love. I consecrate and abandon to Him my whole being, and every moment of my life. I am forever bound to my Beloved, His servant, His slave,

His creature, since He is every thing to me. His unworthy spouse—I, Sister Margaret Mary, dead to the world. All in God, nothing in myself. All for God, and nothing for self."

Admitted to profession by the unanimous voice of the Sisterhood, she pronounced her solemn vows on November 6, 1672, under Mother Mary Frances de Saumaise, of the Convent of Dijon, who had that year been elected Superior of Paray.

Our Lord then told her, that, becoming His betrothed by the reception of the holy habit, she became His spouse by profession. He inundated her soul with all the delights of Thabor; but this was more grievous to her than death, so ardently did she desire to be conformed to the God of Calvary! "Leave Me to act," said her Beloved, "thou shalt lose nothing thereby. Now thou hast become the sport of My love; abandon thyself to My good pleasure, without any other view or resistance." Then He added: "Be ready to receive Me, for I wish henceforth to make in thee My dwelling, and to converse with thee." At the same moment He gratified her with His sensible presence in a manner she had not yet experienced. She saw Him, she felt Him near her, she understood Him much better than if He had been made palpable to her senses, for these might have distracted her from Him; moreover, it was not in her power to divest herself from this divine presence, which produced so deep an annihilation, that she wished to be incessantly either prostrate or on her knees, and thus she was, as far as her occupations and infirmities permitted. Penetrated with the sentiment of her unworthiness, she appeared before her Sisters only with shame and confusion, and she desired that she might be continually reproached and humbled, esteeming contempt

her true portion, and the most delicious nourishment of her soul.

It is by these ineffable treasures of grace with which He so magnificently dowered her, that our Lord testified the immensity of His affection for her, on the day when, ratifying the vows she had pronounced before His altars, He deigned to give Himself to her, and to take her for His spouse eternally.

CHAPTER IX.

Mary Frances de Saumaise.—Mother de Chantal's Prediction concerning her.—Sister Margaret's Trials in the Novitiate.—Sister Catharine Marest.—Her Masculine Temperament.—She Sleeps beside a Corpse.—Our Sister is appointed to assist her in the Infirmary.—Martha and Mary.—Pensioners at the Visitation.—Father Eudes.—Margaret's Pupils, Mary Chevalier and Catharine Billet.—Incidents.—Margaret's Spirit of Labor.—Accident.—Her Devotion to the Sick.—She is carried away by Indiscreet Fervor.—Our Lord reproaches her.—Mother de Saumaise bears Testimony to her Virtues.

Among the young Religious of the monastery of Dijon, Mother de Chantal had remarked one who already gave promise of great maturity of judgment, and a singular talent for business. The saint predicted that this dear child, who was called Mary Frances de Saumaise, would one day be among the best Superiors in the Institute. Frances becoming, in course of time, assistant to Mother Seraphine Boulier, exercised this office with so much wisdom and humility, that she was judged fit for a higher one, and when, in 1672, the Religious of Paray asked a Superior from the monastery of Dijon, there was no hesitation in offering her for their suffrages. Some years later, she governed the monastery at Moulins. She served as a bond between these three holy houses, in which she enkindled the divine ardors she had drawn in her intimate intercourse with Margaret Mary, to whom she was shown as one of the twelve stars destined to compose in heaven the crown of the Heart of Jesus. Such was the Religious under whom the servant of God

made her profession, and who was charged to direct this great soul in the paths of monastic perfection.

As will be seen, they loved each other with deep and holy affection. But it must not be imagined that Mother de Saumaise, in her tenderness for Margaret Mary, refrained from trying her virtue. Ah! that would be to act very unlike the saints, who love like God himself, of whom the apostle fears not to say: *Whom He loveth He chasteneth, and He scourgeth every child He receiveth!* In a similar manner acted Mother de Saumaise, and the more leaning she felt toward our Sister, the more eager was she to feed her with the bread of humiliations and sufferings, for which it was evident that she hungered.

She first put her to assist in the infirmary under Sister Catharine Marest, a very energetic person, whose character led her to exact as much work of others as she herself performed, and this is saying quite enough. With a robust and almost masculine constitution, she had, from her entrance into the convent, inured herself to all kinds of fatigue, as washing, digging in the garden, reaping the corn, &c., and though she was a choir Sister, she often helped the lay Sisters to work the dough, *and this with a joy and grace which made it a pleasure to look at her.* During the pestilence, she had remained day and night among the dead and dying, dividing the labor of burying the former and nursing the latter. One night, a sick Sister having died, this infirmarian, after she had shrouded her, said: "You sleep on your side and I will sleep on mine;" and, stretching herself on the paillasse of the deceased, she slept profoundly! In a word, the memoirs of the times paint Sister Marest as a true Martha, and behold her associated with a true Mary! It happened as in the Gospel: Martha complained of Mary, who, ravished in holy ecstasies, fell, in spite of herself, into the

mysterious sleep of contemplation. How often was she not treated as an ignoramus, as a dolt! How often did she not fall and break all that she held in her hands! We shall see, later on, that the devil was not a stranger to these numerous accidents. When they occurred he would laugh at her, and say, sneeringly: "Ah! the ape! she will never be worth any thing." One day she was dashed like a lightning-flash from the top of the staircase to the bottom; but an earthen vessel which she carried was not broken, nor were the hot coals it contained spilled. It was thought that such a fall must bruise her sadly, but her Angel Guardian preserved her. Several other falls which she had were more serious in their effects, subjecting her to violent headaches and toothaches. The only solace she permitted herself was, when she felt faint, to go into the open air for an instant, after which she returned among her Sisters, with as serene a countenance as if nothing had happened, or as if she felt no pain at all.

At Paray, as in most of the Visitation houses, grew in the shade of the sanctuary, under the vigilant eyes of the Religious who taught them, some young ladies belonging to the better families of the neighborhood, and destined to live one day holily in the world, or even, if they felt the call, to devote themselves to God in the cloister. These boarders, or, as they were sweetly called by the religious family of which they were the hope, *the little Sisters*, received an education less brilliant than solid, pious, simple, and, in a word, perfectly conformable to the spirit of the rule and of its founder. "Would to God," said a holy person of the time, "that all who take children into their convents would act toward them as the Visitandines do toward their pensioners, especially as regards dress. Nothing could be more modest, and at

the same time more suitable. You see neither the hair, nor the bare neck, nothing in fact of the world; and you might well say that they were clothed with propriety and modesty."*

After a year passed in the infirmary, Margaret Mary was sent to assist in the education of the boarders. With an instinct keen for their age, these happy children were not slow to discover the treasure they possessed in their mistress. Two of them, who subsequently became Ursulines, were called, forty years later, to depose in the processes, and have given some touching details. They deposed that she was seen to spend in prayer all the time her employments left her, that she spoke to them of God "in a charming and profitable manner," and that she bore with unalterable sweetness trials and contradictions of every species. Seeing her one day reproved very severely by a Religious, the young Mary Chevalier said to her: "My dear Mother, you are very good to suffer that!"—"My child," replied the servant of God, "let us go before the Blessed Sacrament to ask pardon, and to pray for one who has afforded me an occasion of suffering for Jesus Christ." Another time, in presence of Catharine Billet, being called a visionary and hypocrite, she remarked to the infant witness of this affront: "These people truly know me!"

We shall see how, not less courageous than Francis Xavier, she applied her lips to a venomous ulcer which gnawed the foot of one of the boarders, to draw out the corruption, and she daily renewed this heroic act, till the Superior desired her to refrain. Hence, these children venerated her as a saint, and kept as relics the medals and chaplets they received from her hands. They hesi-

* *L'Enfance admirable de la Mère de Dieu*, par le P. Eudes. Preamble: To persons who educate little girls.

tated not to attribute to her the knowledge of the future, the penetration of the secrets of hearts, and in support of this they cited several remarkable particulars. Thus, of fourteen pensioners, which was the whole number then at Paray, it was thought that half, or nearly so, would become Visitandines, but she declared that only two of them would follow that vocation, and her prediction was verified, contrary to all appearances. One of them, Catharine Billet, was from infancy brought up in the idea that she was destined to live and die in the monastery; so sure was she of this, that she one day amused herself by planting a tree, in the hope that she would eat the fruit of it when she became a Religious. Seeing her do this, her holy mistress said: "My child, you need not take so much pains; you will never be a Religious in this house." In deposing to this, Catharine said that at that epoch every one, even her parents, believed her destined for the Visitation; no one foreseeing that the prediction would ever be realized by her becoming an Ursuline nun.

We will not follow our Blessed Sister into the different employments she exercised, in the storeroom, in the refectory, in the sacristy, &c., in each of which she seized with avidity every occasion of humbling herself and of suffering. Happening, by reason of her abstraction, to let fall some broth she was bringing to the refectory, she gathered it up, "more dust than soup," and dined on it. If decayed fruit or insipid food or an ill-cooked morsel was on the table, she helped herself to it, and she appropriated also to herself, as a privilege, the bits of bread the pensioners threw here and there about the house. Any thing was good enough for her, or rather the worst of every thing was too good for her: she often said that *it is not to be poor to have made a vow of poverty, and not to be in want of any thing.*

All the time not given to prayer, she employed in working with her hands, and she never went to the parlor without bringing there her work. She shared largely in the labors of the house, which were, perhaps, more severe in this humble monastery than in many others; for the Religious of Paray carded their own wool, spun their own hemp, worked in their gardens; and several times a day the silence of prayer and the voice of psalms was regularly succeeded by the noise of spinning-wheels and of spades, hard and continual labor, at the price of which they had the consolation of earning the necessaries of life, and being able to distribute to the poor of Jesus Christ abundant alms. Margaret used a thousand stratagems to procure herself the most laborious occupations. She might be seen assisting the lay Sisters to wash the kitchen utensils, to carry wood, to make the bread; and this with such zeal that on one occasion it nearly cost her life: drawing water from the pump, the handle, which she was not very expert at working, escaped her hands, and, wheeling rapidly around, struck her full in the face: she fell backwards, two of her teeth were knocked out, and the blood gushed from her mouth. A piece of flesh hung from her gums; without being the least distressed, she handed her scissors to one of the boarders who passed by, and asked her to cut off the dangling flesh, but the poor child fled terrified. What did the Blessed Margaret then do? She took the scissors herself, and with a firm hand she clipped off the flesh, with as little ado as if she were clipping off a piece of her veil.

O, what beautiful occasions she had of mortifying herself in these different employments, particularly in the service of the sick! Then it was that she surmounted her natural repugnances to such an extent, that we dare not offend the delicacy of our readers by too faithful a

recital. "Thou art foolish to do all that," said the Beloved of her soul. "O, my divine Master," she responded, "I do it all to please Thee and to gain Thy heart!" Far from blunting her sensitiveness, our Lord, to teach her that she could do nothing without Him, permitted her to be tormented more and more by natural aversions, with which her soul was troubled and agitated.

As she struggled one day for a long time without any success, He appeared to her covered with wounds, and reproached her for her cowardice. "What wilt Thou have me to do," she asked; "my will is stronger than myself."—"Put it in the wound of My side, thou shalt draw thence strength to surmount thyself."—"O, my God," she cried with transport, "place it there Thyself, and fasten it so tightly that it never can come out!"

Tormented all her life with an insupportable thirst, like to that experienced in a burning fever, she for that reason kept far from her all refreshing beverages. Once she abstained from drinking for fifteen days together, and she imposed on herself the same privation from Thursday to Saturday each week, in memory of the painful thirst our Lord suffered on the Cross. Having been ordered by her Superiors to drink on these days, even out of meals, she obeyed, but in such a manner that her mortification lost nothing; for she drank hot water, or nauseous water; mortification which was great, but indiscreet, and for which she was publicly reproved by the Superior, who reminded her of the beautiful maxim of St. Francis de Sales, "the truly obedient soul conforms not only to the commandment, but to the spirit and intention of him who gives it."

Our Lord Himself testified His displeasure at this little wandering from the spirit of obedience. On Easter Sunday, being hindered by her occupations from making her

prayer with the community, she could not refrain from yielding to a slight movement of displeasure: her Divine Master then said to her: "Know, My child, that the prayer of submission and sacrifice pleases Me more than contemplation." Again, as she practised a mortification without express permission, He said: "Know that I reject all such things as corrupt fruits. A religious who takes her ease by obedience is more pleasing to Me than one who, through self-will, overwhelms herself with austerities." Permitted to take the discipline for the space of an *Ave Maria*, she exceeded this measure: "For the *Ave Maria*, it was for Me," said He, "but for the time exceeding that, it was for the demon." And as she committed the same fault another time, when she performed the same penance for the souls in purgatory, these souls surrounded her, complaining that she struck them.

Every time she yielded to these indiscreet fervors, He showed her a severe countenance; Mother de Saumaise was ravished with admiration, and when, after the death of Margaret Mary, the Sisters urged her to describe some matters connected with the Servant of God, she gave the following magnificent testimony: "During six years that I knew our Sister Margaret Mary, I can certify that she never relaxed a moment in the resolution she had taken, consecrating herself to God by the religious profession, to make herself subject to His empire before all, above all, and in all, never seeking for herself any pleasure, whether of mind or body. And this fidelity drew upon her from Divine Bounty very special favors, which excited in her a great desire of crosses, humiliations, and sufferings. It may be said, without any exaggeration, that the most ambitious are not more desirous of honors, than she was of these painful things, which were her joy, sensitively as she felt them."

CHAPTER X.

Our Lord makes Margaret Mary share in the Sufferings of His crucified Life.—She prefers Calvary to Thabor.—Extract from her Memoirs.—Verses.—Our Lord initiates her into the Passion of His Heart.—Mysterious Words.—The Holy Hour.

We have seen that on the day of her profession, invited to the joys of Thabor, this generous spouse of a crucified God reclaimed her share in the sorrows of Calvary: "Leave Me to act," said her Spouse; "every thing has its time; it is My will that thou now be the sport of My love, and thou oughtest to live abandoned to My will, without seeing, without resisting; resigning thyself to Me even at thy own expense; and thou shalt lose nothing thereby." Our Lord kept her to her word. The year which followed her profession (1673) brought her new pledges of love—pledges eagerly desired by true lovers who walk under the standard of the Cross, who repeat that sublime cry of St. Teresa, "To suffer or to die!"

First, He gave her a share in His crown of thorns. Going one day to communion, the Sacred Host appeared in her eyes more resplendent than the sun, so that she could not endure its brightness. In the midst of this light she saw our Lord, who, holding a crown of thorns over her head, uttered these words:—"My child, receive this crown as a token of that which will soon be given thee by conformity with Me."

The painful accidents to which we have already alluded, joined to her habitual sufferings, served to realize this promise. Her head, transpierced as it were with sharp points, felt darting pains, which redoubled whenever she reposed on it. She had no respite, day or night, and sleep seemed banished from her eyelids. Far from complaining, she knew not how to express her gratitude for so great a favor. "I acknowledge," said she, "that I feel more indebted to my Saviour for this precious crown, than if He had presented me with all the diadems of the greatest kings on earth; and the more so, as no one can take it from me. It often puts me in the happy necessity of watching and entertaining myself with this only object of my love, not resting my head on a pillow, in imitation of my Divine Master, who could not rest his own on the bed of the cross."

Meantime, her natural repugnances were ever on the increase, and all human consolations turned into bitterness for her. If she went to take some relaxation with her sisters, this was for her a new suffering. Yet she preserved a serene countenance, and appeared to take part in the common joy, though not without exclaiming from time to time, "O my God, how dearly do I purchase this pleasure!" How many times did not our Lord present her with His cross! In the beginning, He showed it to her covered with flowers, but to prevent all illusion, he added these words: "Behold the couch of My chaste espousals, where the fire of My pure love should consume thy sacrifice: one by one the flowers will fade, and there will remain but the thorns which these blossoms hide from thy weakness; but a time will come when thou shalt feel their points in so lively a manner that thou wilt need all the force of My love to support the pain."

Another time, He was pleased to show himself to her

on the tree of the cross, saying amorously to her:—"Receive, My daughter, the cross I have given thee, and plant it in thy heart, having it always before thy eyes, and bearing it between thy shoulders. It shall make thee feel most rigorous torments: a hunger without satiating thee; a thirst without refreshing thee; a heat without cooling thee." Not comprehending these words, she said very simply to our Lord, as St. Paul formerly said on the road to Damascus:—"*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*" To which he responded:—"To carry My cross in thy heart is to be crucified in all things. To carry it between thy arms, is to embrace lovingly all the crosses that present themselves, as the most precious pledges of My love that I could give thee in this life. The continual hunger shall be hunger for suffering, to honor that which I had to suffer for my Father. The continual thirst for Me, and the salvation of souls, in memory of that which I suffered on the cross." And as, in the midst of all these crosses, she superabounded with joy and consolation, she besought God to deprive her of this sensible sweetness. "Oh! my Lord," said she, "I sacrifice to Thee all these pleasures; keep them for holy souls who glorify Thee better than I. I wish for Thee alone, and Thee on the cross, where I wish to love Thee for love of Thyself alone!"

Thus did our Lord elevate her by degrees to the most sublime abnegation, till the day when, making a last appeal to her generosity, He deigned to invite her to renounce freely all the consolations of her exile, to embrace unreservedly the crucified life. She herself tells us how she was led to this heroic resolution.

"Once," says she, "this only Love of my soul presented Himself to me, holding in one hand a picture of the happiest life that could be designed for a religious

soul, all peace, abundance of interior and exterior consolations, perfect health, the applause and esteem of creatures, and the enjoyment of all that can be imagined agreeable to nature. In the other hand, He held a picture of a poor and abject life, ever crucified by all sorts of humiliations, contempt, and contradictions; ever suffering mentally and physically. He then said:—'Choose, My child, whichever is more agreeable to thee. I will give thee the same favors independent of thy selection.' I prostrated myself at His feet to adore Him, saying:—'O, my Lord, I desire only Thee, I wish for no choice but that which Thou Thyself wilt make for me.' He still pressed me to choose; I answered:—'Thou alone art sufficient, O my God! Do for me whatever will glorify Thee most, without any regard to my interests or inclination; please Thyself, and I shall be contented.' Then he said, that like Magdalen I had chosen the better part, which should not be taken from me, since He Himself would be my heritage forever, and presenting to me the picture of the suffering life, He said:—'Behold what I select for thee; what pleases Me most, as much for the accomplishment of My designs as for rendering thee conformable to Myself. The other life is a life of joy, and not of merit; thy pleasure is reserved for eternity.' I then accepted this tableau of death and crosses, kissing the hand of Him who presented it; and though nature trembled, I embraced it with all the affection of my heart. I shall fasten it on my breast, and so intimate is my realization of it, that it seems as though I could regard myself only as a composition of all I then saw represented. I find myself so changed with regard to my interior dispositions, that I no longer recognize myself."

She then repeated these words, with which she habitually entertained herself:—

Thy cross, O Lord, my glory is;
Thy love it is that guideth me;
Thy love alone possesseth me;
That Love, O Lord, sufficeth me!"*

Again she expressed in sweet canticles, which she sometimes composed, the ardor with which she was consumed:—

"Like the doe on the scorching mountain,
I seek the cooling, sparkling fountain;
The marksman, with unerring dart,
Hath wounded, pierced me to the heart!"†

Thus sang, four centuries previous, the great seraph of Mount Alverno, wounded in his very flesh with the burning arrow which had pierced his heart at the view of Jesus on the cross: upon which the other Francis, father of Margaret Mary, cried out: "O God, what painful loves and what loving pains! for, not only then, but all the

*"La croix est ma gloire;
L'amour m'y conduit;
L'amour me possède:
L'amour me suffit."

†"Je suis une biche harassée,
Qui cherche l'onde avec ardeur:
La main du chasseur m'a blessée
Sou dard a percé jusqu'au cœur."

A friend, to whom it would be a pleasure to us to acknowledge the amount of our indebtedness, could it be done without wounding excessive modesty and humility, sends us the following translation of these lines:—

'I haste like hunted doe
Where cooling waters flow;
For love's unerring dart
Is quivering in my heart."—*Trans.*

rest of his life, this poor saint languished as it were sick of love."*

Shortly after, our Lord initiated her in the mystery of His dolorous agony, in the Passion of His Divine Heart. "Herein," said He, "I have had more interior sufferings than in the rest of My Passion, abandoned by heaven and earth, charged with the sins of all men. I appeared before the sanctity of God, who, without regarding My innocence, struck Me in His fury, making me drink the chalice which contained all the bitterness of His just indignation; and, as though He had forgotten the sweet name of Father, sacrificed Me to His just anger. No creature can comprehend the torments I then endured; and similar should be the pain the criminal soul ought to feel when, being before the tribunal of the divine sanctity, appeasing itself on her, she is struck, and as it were annihilated in His just fury."

Comparing with the sanctity of God, with her own misery and that of sinful souls, she experienced continual and bitter suffering. This terrible purgation of the spirit, the rigors of which a St. Teresa and a Blessed Angela Corbara had endured before her, and which renders so evident the truth of this saying of the Apostle:—*Our God is a consuming fire;* mystics compare to the situation of a poor villager, who is forced to go into the presence of a great king whom he fears to affront by his rude manners, and his total ignorance of etiquette:—"Thus," say they, "before the soul had become so near God, God drew her as it were from afar; now that she is closer to him, and as it were His servant, God being nearer, makes her feel how displeasing her imperfection is to Him. Afterwards, this presence will become sweeter to her, but in the mean time

* Treatise on the Love of God.

it is necessary that she should suffer pain greater than any thing she can imagine."*

Margaret Mary was assailed with this strange pain in the retreat she made during the autumn of 1673, the year after her profession, and behold the account she renders of it to Mother de Saumaise:—

"This divine sanctity satisfied itself on me, and imprinted itself so strongly on my mind, that it had rendered me incapable of applying to prayer, and of supporting the interior pain I felt, if the same power that made me suffer had not sustained me. For so great were the pains and despair I felt in appearing before God, that I should desire to be lost, destroyed, annihilated, were it in my power; so unworthy did I feel of appearing in His presence, from which I could not withdraw myself, inasmuch as it followed me everywhere, like a criminal ready to receive his condemnation; but with such great submission to the will of my God, that I am ever disposed to receive all the pains and sorrows He is pleased to send me, with the same love and satisfaction I should experience in His sweetest caresses."

Sometimes she endured this torment for the souls in purgatory, and she then felt the painful impression of the sanctity of love, which, however, was not without its sweetness; sometimes for sinners, and she bent under the weight of the sanctity of Divine Justice. Thus she participated in the divine sufferings of Him who *hath borne our iniquities, and who is made sin for us;* she drank of the chalice of His Passion, she was initiated into the sadnesses and bitterness of His Heart. From time to time she would exclaim:—"Sanctity of my God! how terrible art thou for criminal souls! O my Lord and my

* P. Surin, *la guide spirituelle*, part VII., ch. VI.

God! sustain my weakness, that I may not sink under this heavy burden!"

And He said to her:—"I make thee feel but a small part of My sufferings, for just souls support them, lest they should fall on sinners."

Penetrated with these divine terrors, when the time came for making her annual confession, she suffered extreme anxiety, but Our Lord had pity on her, and said to her:—"Why dost thou torment thyself? Do all in thy power, I will supply whatever may be wanting; I desire chiefly in this sacrament a humble and contrite heart, which, with a sincere will to offend Me no more, makes its accusation candidly; with these dispositions I pardon without delay, and perfect amendment follows."

And as, after confession, she still feared being the sport of some illusion, this Divine Master wrought in her so sweetly and efficaciously that she thought she saw and felt Him cleansing away all stains, and at the same moment clothing her with a white robe, and saying:—"Behold the robe of innocence with which I clothe thy soul, that thou mayest henceforth live with the life of the Man-God; that is, that thou shouldst live as no longer living save by My life, for I am thy life, and thou shalt no more live but in Me and by Me. I desire that thou shouldst no longer act as of thyself, but that thou shouldst suffer Me to act in thee and for thee, remitting to Me the care of all. Thou shouldst be as having no will, leaving Me to will for thee in all and by all."

If she yielded to some slight infidelity, the presence of God became insupportable to her; overwhelmed with the weight of His Sanctity, it had been a thousand times sweeter to her to be cast into a burning furnace. Thus a slight surprise of self-love drew upon her one day the most severe reproaches:—"What hast thou, dust and

ashes, to glory in? thou hast of thyself only nothingness and misery, an abyss of which thou shouldst never lose sight, from which thou shouldst never wander. But, lest the greatness of My gifts should blind thee to what thou art of thyself, I will place before thy eyes thy own picture."—"Immediately discovering to me this horrible picture, wherein was represented all that I am, I was so struck and so horrified with myself, that had He not sustained me I had swooned away with fright. I could not comprehend the excess of His infinite mercy in not having plunged me into hell, and in supporting me, who cannot endure myself. O God! slay me! or hide from me this hideous picture! I cannot look on it and live!"

It was extremely painful to her that obedience would not permit her to revenge on herself the divine justice irritated against her. Yet she consoled herself by the thought that her Sovereign took a singular pleasure in seeing her in this profound annihilation. He ceased not to discover imperfections and stains even when heretofore all had seemed perfect to her; and to establish her in this light, He made her hear on the Feast of All Saints, 1673, these mysterious words:—

"Rien de souillé dans l'innocence;
Rien ne se perd dans la puissance;
Rien ne passe en ce beau séjour;
Tout s'y consomme dans l'amour."*

* We hesitated about translating the above in verse, since the text tells us the words are "mysterious." The friend already alluded to kindly suggests the following:—

"No spot in purity, no stain;
No loss to give Me all, but gain;
No joy in this abode can pall,
Where love divine doth perfect all."

In the explanation given of these words we translate each line literally.—*Trans.*

Long did she meditate on these words, of which Our Lord taught her the sense very soon after.

Nothing sullied in innocence, that is to say, He would suffer no stain in her heart or soul. *Nothing is lost in power*, that is, that she should give Him all, abandon all to Him; since He is power itself, that there could be no danger of loss in confiding all to Him. The other two lines she understood of heaven, where nothing passes away, for all is eternal, and where all things are perfected in love.

At the same time, she had a faint view of this glory: "O God," she continues, "into what transports did not this view put me! As I was in retreat, I passed the whole day in these inexplicable pleasures, and it seemed to me in my transport, that I had nothing more to do than to go promptly to enjoy it."

About the same period, one Friday that she had the happiness of communicating, after having drunk of the fountains of the Saviour, and relished profoundly the delicious waters that flowed from His sacred side, she received the first teaching on the Holy Hour.

Henceforth, every week, from between the night of Thursday and Friday morning, she was desired to rise to recite certain prayers Our Lord had indicated to her, thus to honor the extreme anguish He suffered in the night of His Passion.

"My Lord," said she with simplicity, "Thou knowest that of myself I cannot undertake any thing, and that I can do only what my Superior permits."—"I know that well," He replied, "and, omnipotent as I am, I desire nothing of thee only in dependence on thy Superior."

It was thus He always acted with her, so anxious was He to perfect her in obedience. And now this Divine Saviour bent at His pleasure the will of Superiors to con-

form it to His; again He permitted between His desires and theirs a sort of conflict, by which He proved the fidelity of His Spouse, reserving to Himself to put a term to their resistance when it seemed good to Him, or even to make it serve for the accomplishment of His adorable designs. This is what happened with reference to the Holy Hour:—Long combated by the Superiors of Margaret Mary, this pious practice has not the less triumphed: to-day it flourishes throughout the entire Church, and it has even given birth to an arch-confraternity, the seat of which is at Paray,* and to this Pope Gregory XVI. has granted several precious indulgences. Certainly, Blessed Margaret Mary is well paid for her labor when each week, at the same hour in which the Saviour, prostrate before the Face of His Father, bathed the earth with His Blood, she sees from the heights of heaven so many pious souls, robbing themselves of their repose, and vanquishing the weakness of the flesh, to escape the reproach the Man-God made to the first witnesses of His Agony:—*What! could you not watch one hour with Me?*

Meanwhile she suffered strangely from the celestial advances which pursued her, and which she did all in her power to escape. And, when Our Lord inundated her with new lights, she thus amorously complained to Him:

"Alas! my Sovereign Master, why dost Thou not leave me to the common life of the Daughters of St. Mary? Hast Thou brought me into this holy house that

* See *l'Heure Sainte, Méthode pour faire cet exercice avec fruit,* par C. P. Rob. Debrosse, S. J. Lyon, 1830. When we had the happiness of visiting the monastery of Paray-le-Monial, the register on which were inscribed the names of the associates of the Holy Hour was laid on the tomb of the Servant of God. She well deserves a trophy of this nature.

I may be lost? Give Thy precious graces to those favored souls who will correspond with them better than I, who only resist Thee. I desire only Thy cross and Thy love; no more is required to make me a good religious."

"Let us combat, My daughter," He replied; "I am satisfied; we shall see which will gain the victory, the Creator or the creature, strength or weakness; but whoever will be conqueror, will be so forever." He then added:—

"Understand, that I am not displeased with the opposition thou makest Me through obedience. I love that virtue. For it I gave up My life, and without it nothing can please Me. Therefore do I wish thee not only to obey thy Superiors, but also to do nothing I order thee without their consent. Yet I will teach thee that I am absolute Master of My gifts and My creatures, and that nothing can prevent the accomplishment of My designs over thee."

One day, after communion, Our Lord asked her to reiterate the sacrifice she had made of her whole being to Him.—She replied: "Provided, O Lord, that Thou permittest none of Thy extraordinary communications to be known, unless it be to cause me humiliation, abjection and contempt. I feel my weakness. I fear to betray Thee. Thy gifts are hardly safe in my keeping."—"Fear nothing, My Daughter," was the reply; "I shall be Myself the guardian of thy heart, and shall render it faithful to accomplish My will."

This will, still obscure and mysterious, was revealed to her the following year (1674). Previously, she had been, so to say, the sport of divine love; now she became its pliant instrument. It cost her twelve years of struggle to establish in her own monastery the Devotion of the Heart of Jesus.

These prolonged combats, in which shone successively all her heroic virtues, especially her immense love, we shall relate simply as recorded in her own memoirs and in the annals of the monastery. More eloquently than any thing else, they will portray the breadth of this great soul, which, in the midst of so many crosses, never said, *It is enough;* gladly would she endure a thousand deaths to enkindle in the hearts of her companions some sparks of the divine fire with which she herself was consumed so entirely.

CHAPTER XI.

Our Lord manifests to His Beloved the Secrets of His Heart.—Her interior Combats.—Mysterious Operations of Grace.—Her Superior treats her as a Visionary.—Divine Manifestations.—Mother de Saumaise tries her severely.—Our Lord promises her a Director.

Pious souls—for it is to you only these pages are addressed—you may admire here the tender impetuosities of divine love, the touching industry which it employed to communicate itself to us through the medium of this humble maiden, become the intimate confidante of the Heart of Jesus. If such things be beyond our capacity, and seem done to disconcert human wisdom, the greater claim have they to our belief. After the Son of God, in the Sacrament of His love, puts Himself at our discretion, under fragile species, what right have we to fix limits to His tenderness? Let us leave Him, then, to accomplish the wonders which He had already preluded to a St. Gertrude, a St. Catharine of Sienna, a Teresa of Jesus, and rejoice to behold, in these latter times, the most secret movements of His adorable Heart manifested to Margaret Mary, as they had not been to any of them.

From her entrance into the monastery, how frequently had not this blessed soul sights and presentiments which disposed her to a more strict union and more intimate intercourse with the Heart of Jesus! It was generally at preparation for Holy Communion, or at thanksgiving, that she was favored with these celestial lights and inspi-

rations. One vigil of communion, ardently desiring to unite her heart to the Heart of Jesus, she said:—"How can this *nothing* unite itself to *all?* I know well, O my God, that this is possible only through Thy love!" As she spoke this, she saw in the supreme point of her understanding this beautiful Heart more resplendent than the sun, infinite in size: and, at the same time, an imperceptible atom, black and deformed, that made a thousand efforts to approach this beautiful light, efforts which had been impotent, had not the Heart of Jesus drawn it, saying:—"Plunge thyself in My grandeur, and take care never to leave it, for if thou shouldst go from it, thou shalt enter it no more." Afterwards, she felt her heart so attracted to prayer, that it seemed to her she could not be content out of it, and she was inundated with a great peace, without any inquietude but that of not being wholly employed in the exercise of holy love.

Another time, during the exercise after Vespers, she thought she heard some one suddenly repeat that she was standing on the brink of an abyss. The mere word abyss, the sense of which was hidden from her, caused her much trouble. "O my only Love," she cried, "deliver me from this inquietude!" And being in prayer, our Lord appeared to her, covered with wounds, and made her contemplate particularly the wound in His sacred side, saying, that it was a fathomless abyss opened by a measureless dart—that of love. Did she wish to escape the unknown abyss which caused her so much trouble? She must then lose herself in that of His Heart, by which she would surely avoid all others. There, all the elect make their dwelling; there they find the life of the soul with that of the heart. The soul finds there a fountain of living waters; the heart a furnace of love, so that it can no longer live except by love.

The entrance thereto is very small, consequently only those who are little and divested of all things can enter that Adorable Heart.

One day, while reading lecture after vespers, her Beloved presented Himself to her, saying:—"I wish to make thee read the Book of Life, wherein is contained the science of love." He then showed her His Heart, on which she read these words: "My love reigns in suffering, it triumphs in humility, and it rejoices in unity." This was so strongly imprinted on her mind that she never lost the remembrance of it. When she became a prey to painful interior conflicts, our Lord honored her with His visits, and said to her:—"Enter, My daughter, into this delicious garden, to reanimate thy languishing soul." She saw that this garden was His Sacred Heart, adorned with a charming diversity of flowers, all of admirable beauty. She gazed on them, but presumed not to touch them, till He said:—"Thou canst cull them at thy pleasure."—"Oh! my divine Love," she cried, casting herself at His feet, "I desire only Thee, who art to me a bouquet of myrrh, which I wish to carry incessantly in the bosom of my affections."—"Thou hast well chosen," responded He, "for all other flowers are transitory, like this mortal life. Only the myrrh which thou hast chosen preserves its beauty and perfume. The present life is its season, there being no season for it in eternity, where it will change its name."

Up to this time, all these favors were for herself, for her own instruction and consolation, to enkindle in her soul the sacred flame with which saints and angels burn in heaven. They were manifestations of the Heart of Jesus, indeed, but He had not yet showed her His great design which He willed to be accomplished by her means. This design was finally discovered to her in the course of

the year 1674. One day, being prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament, having, as she relates, more leisure than usual, she felt herself suddenly penetrated with a deep feeling of the presence of God, in which she became so absorbed that she forgot herself and the place where she then was, so utterly did she abandon herself to the irresistible power of love. Her Sovereign Master, having caused her for a long time to repose her head on His breast, discovered to her the wonders of His love and the ineffable secrets of His Sacred Heart, which He had kept hidden up to that hour. For the first time, He opened to her this divine Heart, in a manner so real and sensible that no room was left to doubt of the truth of this favor, despite the fear she always had of being deceived. Here are, as far as she was able to recall them, the words Jesus then addressed to her:—

"My divine Heart is filled with love for men, and for thee in particular: being unable any longer to contain its flames, it is compelled to spread them by thy means. It wishes to manifest itself to men, that they may be enriched by these precious treasures whose value I discover to thee: they contain graces capable of drawing men from perdition. I have chosen thee, notwithstanding thy unworthiness and ignorance, for the accomplishment of this great design, the better to make it appear that all is done by Me." He afterwards demanded her heart; she besought Him to receive it. He did so, putting it Himself in His Adorable Heart, when she saw it as an atom consumed in a furnace. Then He withdrew it, all inflamed, and put it in its own place, saying to His servant:—"Behold, My beloved, a precious token of My love, which encloses within thy bosom a small spark of My charity, to serve thee as a heart, and to consume thee to the last moment of thy life."

Mysterious operation of the grace that had already made the martyrs, thou dost imprint on Margaret Mary also the seal of suffering, leaving her for life wounded in her heart and in her flesh. It is true, that the wound she then received did not appear exteriorly, but the place was marked by continual pain, and an excessive heat with which she was incessantly oppressed and which could be appeased only by bleeding. Our Lord wished that she should have recourse to this remedy, but only with the consent of her Superiors. This singularity was for her the source of numberless contradictions. He had predicted this to her, and she always bore them with joy for love of Him. But it is for herself to describe this signal favor for our admiration and edification:

"I remained several days as it were inebriated, inflamed, and, so to say, out of myself, so that it was with extreme difficulty that I could eat, speak, or recreate. I could not sleep, for this wound, the pain of which is so precious to me, caused me such burning heats that it seemed as if it would reduce me to ashes."

If she tasted a little repose, at her waking she experienced so burning a thirst to prostrate herself before the Blessed Sacrament, that the moments seemed hours to her. "I go," said she, "like a languishing invalid, to present myself to my Omnipotent Physician, outside whom I can find neither repose nor remedy for my pains, which are in the left side, near the breast. I remain prostrate at His feet like a living victim, having no other desire than to be immolated and sacrificed to Him, to be consumed as a holocaust in the pure flames of His love."

This favor was renewed on the first Friday of every month. The Sacred Heart of Jesus was shown to her as a brilliant sun, whose rays fell perpendicularly upon a heart inflamed with so lively a fire that it seemed it

would reduce her to ashes. In these precious moments the Divine Master gave her His lessons, and discovered to her the secrets of His Adorable Heart.

It was necessary to mention these ecstasies to Mother de Saumaise, but this was repugnant beyond measure; Margaret Mary would rather declare all her sins to the whole world. Our Lord permitted that the Superior should treat her as a visionary, and take no more notice of the acute pain in her side than of her ecstasies. This pain in her left side, however, increased, and she grew so weak that they began to fear for her life. In obedience, she declared that bleeding would relieve her, but the infirmarians laughed at her. The convent physician assured her it would only injure her, and soon prescribed contrary remedies which but aggravated the pains of the patient. Finally, when it was seen that her life could not last, so oppressed was her respiration and so frequent were her retchings, unless some relief were obtained, they drew a cup of blood, and had scarcely done so when she felt herself strong enough to ask to leave the infirmary. This was renewed many times, always with fresh confusion for the Sister, in whom God, propitious to her desires, allowed to appear only what was of a nature to humble her. Her own companions, ignorant of the mysterious cause of her sufferings, could not understand them; they could with difficulty excuse her, for she seemed a real hypochondriac. The Superior, touched with compassion, caused her to be bled secretly in her cell: the same day she fainted at Mass, and her confusion increased in proportion as she had sought to conceal from the Sisters the cause of these sudden faintings. She told Mother de Saumaise that the daughter of Adam suffered much in her, but the daughter of God rejoiced in all she suffered from God and from creatures. Her greatest trial was the

fear lest she might be in illusion—an apprehension which incessantly haunted her. But, if sadness still approached her heart, "it did not enter, since," said she, "it has been pierced with a certain wound which crosses it as a burning fire: this, being ordinary with me, is more agreeable to me than life, but all these things would be much dearer to me if I knew they were from God."

She received at this time a new assurance of the divine origin of these things, in connection with a loss of voice, which deprived her of the consolation of singing the divine praises, and which she regarded as a punishment of her infidelities. The eve of the Visitation being at matins, after making vain efforts to chant the invitatory, and follow with full voice the psalmody, suddenly, at the first line of the *Te Deum*, she was penetrated with a power that seemed to reduce all the powers of her soul to ashes. As she held her arms crossed in the folds of her robe, a sudden light rested on them, in which she distinguished the figure of a little child more radiant than the sun. "My Lord and my God," she cried out, "by what excess of love dost Thou thus abase Thy infinite grandeurs?"—"I come, My child, to ask why thou so often dost beseech Me not to approach thee."—"Thou knowest, O my Sovereign, that I am not worthy to approach Thee, still less to touch Thee."—"Learn that the more thou dost withdraw into thy own nothingness, the more My greatness lowers itself to find thee." But, fearing it might be an angel of Satan: "If it be Thou, O God," said she, "enable me to sing Thy praises." Having uttered these words, she intoned the *Te Deum* with the choir, and her voice became stronger and more beautiful than ever. The remainder of matins passed thus, but the caresses of her Beloved did not distract her from the office, much as she was interiorly occupied in honoring His Divine Presence. When it was

concluded, Our Lord said to her: "I wished to prove thy motive in reciting My praises, and if thou hadst been less attentive I should have left thee." All this remained so strongly imprinted on her thoughts, that when she retired to rest she could not sleep; but the night appeared very short to her. After a certain space, having again lost her voice, she again asked it of Our Lord, who replied that her voice did not belong to her; that if He had taken it from her it was only to oblige her to believe Him, and that she ought to be equally content whether she possessed it or was deprived of it; and henceforth, in that, as in all the rest, she entirely abandoned herself to the will of God. Chosen to be the instrument of a great design of mercy and love, she was as yet ignorant of the way in which she was to concur in it. Her adorable Master finally taught her, adding many new favors to those He had already showered on her with such excess.

One day, as she was prostrate before the altar on which the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, she felt interiorly drawn by an extraordinary recollection of all her senses and powers: Jesus Christ, her sweet Master, came before her, all resplendent with glory, His five wounds shining like so many suns. Torrents of flames radiated from His Sacred Humanity, especially from His Breast, which being opened, she saw His Heart, the burning source of all these flames. At the same time, He made known to her the ineffable wonders of His pure love, and the excess with which He loved men whose ingratitude was more grievous to Him than all the pains of His Passion, united.

"If they returned Me love for love, all I have done for them would appear but little to My love; but they evince only coldness, and they respond to My advances

only by rebuffs. Do then, at least, console me, by supplying for their ingratitude, as far as thou canst."

And as she urged her inability, He replied: "Stay, here is what will supply all that is wanting to thee." At the same moment, this divine Heart being opened, there issued from it a flame so ardent, that she thought it would consume her. So penetrated was she, that she could no longer sustain it, and she begged God to have compassion on her weakness. He said to her in reply:

"I shall be thy strength, fear nothing; but be attentive to My voice, and to what I require of thee to fit thee for the accomplishment of My designs. In the first place, thou shalt receive Me in the Holy Sacrament as often as obedience permits, notwithstanding all the mortifications and humiliations which may happen thee on that account; for these are pledges of My love. Secondly, thou shalt communicate on the first Friday of every month; and, on every Thursday night, I will make thee participate in the mortal sadness it was My will to endure in the Garden of Olives, and this participation in My agony will be more insupportable to thee than death. Thou shalt accompany Me in the humble prayer I then made to My Father; and for this purpose thou shalt rise between eleven and twelve o'clock, and prostrate thyself with Me for an hour, with thy face against the ground, as well to appease the anger of My Father as to honor, and in some manner sweeten, the bitterness I then felt in being abandoned by My Apostles, which obliged me to reproach them with not being able to watch one hour with Me. During this hour, thou wilt do as I shall teach thee. But listen, My daughter; believe not lightly every spirit, and confide not in thyself. Satan is raging to deceive thee, for which reason, do nothing without the

approbation of those who conduct thee, that, learning on obedience, nothing may injure thee, for he has no power over the obedient soul."

During this vision she was absorbed, and, so to say, out of her self: when drawn away she could not answer any question, nor even support herself without great difficulty. All burning and trembling with these celestial flames, she was brought to the Superior, before whom she humbled herself as usual. She felt an incredible joy, esteeming herself as a criminal, for whom most severe treatment was too sweet. When she had related all, Mother de Saumaise treated her ecstasy with the greatest contempt, and would not permit her to do what Our Lord had prescribed to her, "which consoled me much," said she, "and I withdrew in great peace."

But the fire that devoured her caused her a great fever, which she suffered for sixty days, her life being despaired of. She frequently fainted away, and in one of these swoons the Three Persons of the Adorable Trinity appeared to her, as formerly to the patriarch Abraham, under the form of three young men, clothed in white, all resplendent with light, of the same age, the same size, the same beauty. The Father, in presenting her with a heavy cross studded with sharp nails, and laden with all the instruments of the Passion, said to her: "Behold, My daughter, I make thee the same present as I made to My Beloved Son."—"And I," said Jesus Christ, "wish to fasten thee to it as I Myself was fastened, and I will keep thee company very faithfully." The Holy Ghost added that He, being only pure love, would consume her upon this cross in purifying her.

She felt indescribable peace and joy, but she then comprehended not the extent of the suffering which this vision portended.

Were these multiplied ecstasies and revelations supernatural graces? Mother de Saumaise, who wished for positive proofs, always hesitated to pronounce on this delicate question. She desired the Sister to ask for health, which, if obtained, would be a sign that she was under the influence of the Spirit of God, and cause the Superior to permit her to execute what Our Lord had commanded her regarding prayer during the night, and the communion on the First Friday of the month. Margaret obeyed, and her recovery was the result. The Holy Virgin appeared to her, conversed with her for a long time, and caressed her with maternal tenderness, saying: "Take courage, my dear child, in the health I bestowed on thee on the part of my Son, for thou hast still a long and painful journey to go, always remaining on the cross, amid nails, thorns, and scourges; but fear nothing, I promise thee my protection, I will never abandon thee."

This, it would seem, should be sufficient for Mother de Saumaise, but it was not so: the humble Religious, diffident in herself, feared to pronounce upon so grave a matter, and referred Margaret to her directors. This became a new source of torture; for these, not being very familiar with interior ways, were unskilled in discerning the movements of the Holy Spirit, and concluded that the lover of the Sacred Heart was deluded, had a diseased imagination, was of a melancholy temperament, and so forth. Consequently they recommended her to banish these phantoms, and they even pushed their irony so far as to advise the Superior to make her take some broth, some solid nourishment.

Poor victim of divine love! see to what she is reduced after so many miraculous favors, so many caresses from her Beloved! She has become for all a true object of

compassion. To listen to the orders she receives from above, is to expose herself to contempt and ridicule; it is to draw upon herself the bitter censures of those who have charge of her soul, and whose authority is sacred in her eyes. To obey them, she wrestled with the spirit that possessed her, though she felt that this was to contend against God Himself.

It is true that Our Lord one day said to her: "I shall hereafter make thee comprehend that I am a wise and prudent director, who can guide souls without danger, when, abandoned to Me, they forget themselves entirely."

But where is the effect of these words? Besides, had He not recommended her to submit in all things to the direction and counsels of those He appointed her spiritual guides? How can wills so contradictory be reconciled? She knew not, till Our Lord, after having well tried her, judged that it was time to put an end to her perplexities, and to fulfil a mysterious promise He had given her Himself:

"Be tranquil; I will send thee My servant."

CHAPTER XII.

Father de la Colombière comes to Paray.—His Charac'er.—His Talents.—His Sermons.—His Perfection.—His extraordinary Vow.—Extracts from his Journal.—From the *Preface* to his Sermons.—His first Interview with Sister Margaret Mary.—His Skilful Direction of her Soul.—Our Lord makes new Manifestations of Himself to her.—Father Eudes procures the Establishment of the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary.—His Hymns.—Our Lord chooses Father de la Colombière to co-operate with Margaret Mary.—He gratefully accepts the Mission.—He is removed from Paray.

During the Autumn of the year 1674, Paray-le-Monial saw arrive at the residence of the Jesuits, of whom he was nominated Superior, Father Claude de la Colombière, a Religious full of zeal and piety, whose growing reputation was not without éclat, whence it was judged that so rare a merit would be more in the keeping with an employment more important and a theatre more vast. Still young, and endowed with a happy genius and a fine personal appearance, he had already gained applause in the pulpit; but he possessed also, in a remarkable degree, all the gifts which charm and attract in the ordinary commerce of life. "A brilliant and polished mind, a subtle and refined judgment, a noble soul, elegant tastes, address, and even grace in all things."* His language was as charming as were his manners, and we are even assured that Patru made so great account of the delicacy of his tastes, that he corresponded with him for several years, his letters

* Preface to the *Sermons* of Father de la Colombière: Lyons, 1692.

being most eloquent of the esteem in which he held him. In a word, the whole demeanor of Colombière was expressive of that indescribable something that denotes the superior man. "Propriety and sweetness accompanied all his movements, and ennobled all his actions. It was easy to attribute to him noble and lofty sentiments, even when he acquitted himself of ordinary duties in his intercourse with men." In short, those who knew him and who tried him, affirm that "his silence, his discourse, his deportment, his whole exterior, were so well regulated that, under all circumstances, he appeared as a man of eloquence and a perfect Religious."

Naturally, he had loved glory; but since he had been intimately convinced of the nothingness of transitory things, he no longer gloried save *in Jesus Christ and Him crucified.* He had recently taken one of these grand determinations which form an epoch in the spiritual life, and renew the whole interior man. He had engaged himself by vow to observe faithfully, all the rules and constitutions of his institute, without any exception. Now among these rules, beside those which subject the religious to the common life, not without much pain to nature, there are others more elevated which aim at nothing less than the separation of the soul from itself, to devote it unconditionally and unreservedly to the sacred folly of the Cross; a sublime end, which all do not attain, though all ought to pursue, striving to approach it as nearly as possible. The rules of the Society of Jesus, according to the express declaration of the holy Founder, do not oblige under pain of sin. This would be to exact too much of weak human nature and to demand perfection, and even consummate perfection, from those who have embraced this kind of life only as a *means* to acquire it. St. Ignatius wisely judged that the practice of

heroic virtue ought not to be imposed on a whole body; that it was quite enough to *tend* to it with the grace of God; and experience has shown that he was not deceived. All these rules, then, the greatest and the best, Father de la Colombière had often read and meditated, and he had applied himself for fifteen years to practise them when, during the great retreat of his third probation, moved by an extraordinary grace, and wishing, as he himself said, to break with one stroke all the chains of self-love, "he sought and obtained of his director permission to vow to God the full and perfect observance of them, a most generous resolution, capable, as a pious contemporary observed, of terrifying the most spiritual persons.

"I vow to God," said he, "to desire to be outraged, overwhelmed with calumnies and injuries, to pass for a fool." This is what St. Ignatius called, "to clothe one's self with the liveries of Jesus Christ:" noble ambition, peculiar to all saints and great Christian souls. And as he went to put the last seal on this resolution, he added: "It seems to me that for this purpose I have only to ask of God that He preserve me in the sentiments with which, through His infinite mercy, He has already inspired me." Whence may be gathered what signal victories he had already gained over self-love, previous to engaging in this way of sublime perfection. He had vowed "the greatest selfabnegation and continual mortification." He had vowed, in fine, to do all for the glory of God, and nothing through human respect. "This last point," says he, "pleases me much; I feel that it will establish me in great interior peace and contentment."

He was not deceived: bound so strictly to the exercise of virtues so contrary to nature, he experienced neither anxiety nor scruple, so faithfully constant was he to his

sacred engagement. Those who lived with him, and who learned after his death what he had vowed, testified that he never belied his promise in the smallest particular. By this is explained the great edification he gave everywhere, even by his very presence. "Penetrated with the greatness of God and the nothingness of creatures, He could not conceal the spirit that governed him. It was palpable to all who saw him, and when he spoke his hearers dare not conceive thoughts unworthy of sanctity, or a mediocre desire of acquiring it. His mere presence inspired great sentiments with reference to God and to salvation."

Such was, according to the testimony of contemporaries, this eminent man, this holy Religious, whom Our Lord Himself, in indicating him to Margaret Mary, had called *His servant;* a eulogy before which all others pale, and which suffices to render forever precious the memory of Claude de la Colombière.

The same Spirit that had mutually revealed their souls to St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal, failed not to establish between these holy souls a mysterious correspondence, to unite them for the grand design of mercy and love announced by Our Lord. The first time he called to pay his respects to the community, she heard an interior voice which said to her: "Behold him whom I send thee." And in the Ember Days of September, hearing for the first time her confession, the Father conjectured what had passed within her, and sought to learn it from herself; but she made him no overtures, unwilling to anticipate in any thing the directions of her Superiors. Shortly after, during an exhortation he addressed to the community, he was so struck with the extraordinary grace which shone in her, that he could not avoid speaking of it to Mother de Saumaise, who soon after

desired the Sister to disclose her interior disposition, &c., unreservedly to him. She obeyed, surmounting a great repugnance, which she did not conceal from him. Father de la Colombière was not credulous; his writings, especially his letters, bear testimony to this; but he was not the man to slight the gifts of God, when they appeared clothed with all the characters of true sanctity. Convinced, after mature deliberation, that there was no delusion, he fully reassured the Sister, inviting her to yield to her supernatural attractions, and not to contradict the movements of the Holy Spirit. He made her admire the infinite goodness of God, which had not been rebuked by her resistances, adding, that she had great reason to humble herself because of the special graces of Our Lord, which were manifestly the effects of an incomprehensible mercy. Finally, he gave her sage counsels on prayer, and advised her never to stray from the sure and perfect way of holy obedience.

The Christmas holidays being come, on the Feast of St. John the Evangelist she received a favor similar to that which the Church celebrates in the office of that day: —*This is John, who at the last supper reposed on the breast of Our Lord—Happy Apostle! to whom have been revealed the secrets of heaven.* During this ecstasy, the Divine Heart was represented to her on a throne of fire, with flames radiating in all directions and transparent as crystal. The wound He received on the cross was visible; there was a crown of thorns around this Sacred Heart, and a cross rose above it, to make known, as the Redeemer explained, that His love was the source of His sufferings; that from the first moment of the Incarnation, all His passion had been present to Him, so that the cross had always been, as it were, planted in his Heart. He said that the great desire He had to be perfectly loved

by men inspired Him with the design of manifesting to them His Heart, and that he would take a singular pleasure in being honored under the symbol of this heart of flesh, the image of which he wished to be exposed to view, to the end to move by this object the insensible hearts of men. He promised that He would shed abundantly in the hearts of all that honored Him thus, the treasures with which He is replenished; and He added that this devotion was "as a last effort of His love, which desired to favor the Christians of these latter times, proposing to them at the same time an object and a means so proper to engage them to love Him, and to love Him solidly and ardently.

He then addressed to her these words: "Here, My daughter, is the design for which I have chosen thee; and on account of which I have done thee so many favors, and watched over thee from childhood. I have been Myself thy master and director, to dispose thee to receive all these great graces, among which thou shouldst count as one of the most signal, that by which I discover to thee and give thee the greatest of all treasures, by showing thee, and at the same time giving thee, My Heart itself."

Then she prostrated herself on the ground, unable to explain her sentiments otherwise than by silence, which she soon interrupted by sobs and tears.

She added, with much ingenuousness, that she happened to mention these favors to her Sisters, imagining that they habitually receive similar ones; but Father Colombière dissuaded her from this, and thus she perceived that the time was not yet propitious, nor were souls sufficiently prepared for the manifestation of the design of the Most High in this matter.

Some time after, on the eighth of February, was cele-

brated in the whole diocese of Autun, to which Paray belongs, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary, a feast which had been introduced by Father Eudes (in 1648) of pious memory, with the approbation* of the Bishop of Autun. This date is not without importance, since it aids us to comprehend the admirable economy of Providence in the manifestations of two objects infinitely dear to our piety.

Father Eudes, so zealous for the glory of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, is one of the precursors of Margaret Mary. If he did not receive, like her, a high mission to this effect, marked with a miraculous character, at least in following the movements of his devotion, he prepared the hearts of the faithful to become attentive to the appeals of the Heart of Jesus, of which Margaret was the confidante and the authorized interpreter. This she herself has taken care to note in her writings; it was on the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary that she received one of the signal favors which prepared for the establishment of the Feast of the Heart of Jesus, to teach us, doubtless, that by the Heart of this Mother of beautiful love, we should have free and easy access to the loving and amiable Heart of her Son Christ Jesus.†

This beautiful feast was then celebrated, and in all the churches and chapels of the diocese of Autun were sung the sweet pious hymns of Father Eudes, of which we give some echo in the following strophes:—

Maiden the lowliest,
Mother the holiest,

* Father Eudes himself cites this approbation in his work, *The Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God.*

† *Memoirs of Blessed Margaret Mary;* written by order of Mother de Saumaise. MS. Archives of Paray.

Who with the tenderest love
Ever aimest thy Heart,
Like a burning dart,
To the Heart of our Saviour above!

Its price but God knoweth,
Its love He well showeth,
From Him it hath taken its flames—
To His own Heart united,
To His love ever plighted—
'Tis He who hath fastened its chains.

All glory to Jesus,
Whose mercy will ease us
By the Heart of the Spouse of the Dove;
That Heart is excelling,
Made for Jesus to dwell in,
With the Father and Spirit of love!*

In the humble chapel of the Visitation, Father de la Colombière offered the holy mysteries of the altar, with ardors more inflamed than usual. When Margaret approached the Eucharistic table, she saw the heart of

* Plein de la plus vive tendresse,
Dont Dieu seul connaît tout le prix,
Le Cœur de la Mère sans cesse
Se porte vers le Cœur du Fils.

L'amour qui possède son âme
L'unit à lui par de deux nœuds,
Elle emprunte de lui sa flamme;
Tous deux brûlent des mêmes feux.

Par le Cœur très pure de Marie,
Temple de la Divinité,
A Jésus l'auteur de la vie,
Gloire soit dans l'éternité

the holy priest and her own plunged in the Heart of Jesus as in a furnace, and she heard a voice which said: "Thus will My pure love unite these three hearts forever." She understood that this union would be wholly for the glory of the Sacred Heart, the treasures of which she should discover to her director, that he might know the price of them, and in that recompense all spiritual goods would be shared between them. And as she then represented her indigence, and the inequality she believed to exist between so virtuous a person and herself, He replied: "The infinite riches of My heart will supply and equalize all. Tell him only these things, without any fear."

What was the astonishment of the Father when he learned the choice Our Lord had made of him for the exaltation of His Sacred Heart! He was utterly confounded, and the humble sentiments he expressed on receiving this happy message touched the heart of Margaret so deeply, that she said she was more edified thereat than by all the exhortations of this man of God.

Nevertheless, Our Lord had not yet sufficiently explained to her the great design so often foreshadowed: all that He had up to this prescribed to her was the *Holy Hour* and the communion on the first Friday of each month; this was but a kind of prelude. To add a new feast to the feasts of the Church, to those which were established in the thirteenth century to honor the Body and Blood of Our Lord; to the chant of *Lauda Sion* to make reparation succeed, and to crown with this act of solemn reparation all the homages rendered to the Holy Host: what a noble and touching thought! It might well be born of itself in a soul conscious of having received so many proofs of love; but it had never been realized if it had not had Jesus Christ for its author. It

was finally manifested to Margaret Mary in the year 1675, during the Octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

She was in choir, prostrate before the adorable Host, and in the act of receiving excessive graces, when she felt moved to make God some return, to render Him love for love: Our Lord said to her: "Thou canst not better repay My love than by doing what I have so often asked of thee."

Then, showing her His Divine Heart, He said to her: "Behold this Heart, which has loved men so much that it has spared nothing to testify that love. In return, I receive from the greater number only ingratitude, contempt, sacrilege and coldness, in this Sacrament of My love. But what I feel most keenly is, that even hearts consecrated to Me treat Me thus. Hence, I desire that the first Friday after the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament shall be set apart as a particular festival in honor of My Heart, to make reparation for all these indignities offered to it, and as a day of communion to atone for the unworthy treatment it has received when exposed on the altars. I promise that My Heart shall be dilated to shed profusely the influences of Divine love upon those who render it this honor, and lead others to do the same."

The servant of God then took the liberty of observing to Him that she knew not how to execute what He had so long desired, but He ordered her to go to His Servant, whom He had sent her for the accomplishment of His designs.

When she had related all to the Father, he no longer hesitated. Too happy in being the first disciple of the Heart of Jesus, he made a perfect offering of himself, and engaged himself for life to its service, by an act of consecration that he pronounced the day after the Octave of the Festival of the Blessed Sacrament, June 21, 1675. It

was the Feast of St. Louis Gonzaga, a sweet saint, always propitious to this devotion, and of whom St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi had said, that *while yet in this life, he ceased not to aim toward the Heart of the Incarnate Word arrows of love, no more to be separated from his own heart, now that he is in glory.*

Henceforth, to make the Heart of Jesus known and loved was the dearest occupation of Father de la Colombière. He employed therein, first, all those whom he directed in the ways of Christian perfection. Will not his high reputation for learning and virtue smooth away all obstacles, dissipate all clouds? Assuredly, this was to be expected. But by a secret design of God the contrary happened. When it was perceived that he took a particular interest in Margaret, and gave ear to all she said, there was loud murmuring in the monastery and outside, which finally lowered the credit of the Jesuit, heretofore so solidly established. She herself declares in her Memoirs that she suffered much on his account, the divine goodness not permitting that she should receive any consolation, except at the expense of new humiliations to herself and to all who showed her any kindness. Hence this urgent appeal of the Heart of Jesus, destined to resound through the world, was prized in the beginning only by a small group of elect souls. Of this number was Mother de Saumaise, who consequently was from that time united to Father de la Colombière and to her holy spiritual child by the bonds of strict and inviolable charity and friendship.

Things were in this state when the holy director received from his Superiors an order to go into England, for a mission of which it was impossible to foresee the term. Warned by her interior lights, Margaret had already announced this to him, and persisted in assuring

him of it—despite of two contrary commands which were eventually revoked—till the moment when the third message proved that she was rightly informed. Father Colombière then prepared to leave Paray, after a sojourn of about two years.

Was this what Our Lord had promised His Spouse when, in charging her with so overwhelming a mission, He had said: "I will send thee My servant." What a change for her, and how many other trials did it not presage! It is true, that she had gathered from this apostolic man strength and light; but she lost him the moment she seemed to need him most. Deprived of his support, what would become of her, under directors resolved in advance to condemn her ways, to interdict what Our Lord had prescribed her? Who would now trouble himself to aid her in her mission? All the old prohibitions renewed, her celestial communications turned into ridicule, herself treated as a fool, or worse: this was easy to foresee, impossible to avoid. She could not prevent herself from complaining to her Beloved, from whom she received this response: "What! am I not enough for thee? I, who am thy beginning and thy end?"

Before taking leave of her, the Father gave her his last instruction, telling her what she should do to correspond with the desires of the Divine Master: "He demands all, because He wishes to reign over you as over one who is His by every title; that He may dispose of all, that nothing may resist Him, that all may be pliable, bending to the least sign of His will. He asks nothing of you, because He desires to do all in you, without any interference of your own, contenting yourself with being the subject on which, and in which, He acts, that all the glory may be to Him; that He alone may be known, loved, and praised eternally. Amen."

He departed, himself fortified by the lights the Blessed Margaret Mary had received from heaven concerning him: lights which were to him very opportune succors in the midst of the new trials that awaited him in England.

CHAPTER XIII.

Father de la Colombière Preacher to the Duchess of York.—Political and Religious Aspect of England.—Charles II. a Catholic.—The Test Oath.—Catherine of Braganza.—Father Colombière's Life at Court.—Extracts from his Letters.—Margaret Mary's high Opinion of his Sanctity.—His Invocation of the Heart of Jesus.—His Sermon in the Chapel of the Palace, St. James's, on Corpus Christi, 1676.—England refuses to receive the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus.—Father Dalgairns' *Lectures* on the Sacred Heart.—Mutual Intercourse between Father Colombière and Blessed Margaret.

The court of England, to which Father de la Colombière was sent, as preacher to the Duchess of York, was a singularly thorny field. If we did not know from other sources the distinguished merit of this holy Religious, and the high consideration in which his Superiors held him, his selection for such an employment would well testify it; for much prudence, much zeal, great elocutionary talents, the intrepidity of a confessor of the faith, and in some manner the bearing of one, were necessary for such an office in such a court.

The religious animosities which had slumbered for an instant at the restoration of the Stuarts were soon awakened, to be more fierce than ever. Protestant fanaticism had taken for its target the Duke of York, heir-presumptive to the crown, who was disposed, as was well known, to inaugurate his reign by granting liberty of conscience; a liberty than which nothing could be more odious to the Anglicans, who would rule only by force. Evidently, the revolution of 1688 was

then in its germ. The Prince of Orange, through his spies in the two Houses, later on brought it to maturity. The shameful weakness of Charles the Second could be counted on—an indolent monarch, occupied only with his pleasures, always ready to sacrifice to the ambition of the great and the discontent of the people his servants, his friends, and even his brother. To avoid taking the *Test Oath*, which would be against his conscience, the Duke of York had to renounce all his employments, among others that of commander-in-chief of the fleets he had so often led to victory. His marriage with Mary of Modena, a Catholic princess, had been the occasion of a most scandalous rising, and the new duchess, banished from court against all propriety, served a cruel apprenticeship to English life. Soon, it is true, her youth, beauty, and innocence disarmed party spirit, and conquered to her all hearts; but she lived in her palace amid privations and trials most painful to her piety, and the king continued to refuse her a separate chapel, though it had been guaranteed her by the marriage articles. Father Saint Germain, a French Jesuit attached to her person, was assailed by atrocious calumnies, and obliged to fly to France to save his life: he easily presaged the lot reserved for his successor. What dangers for the preacher and the duchess in a country where it was a crime to be a Roman priest, another crime to be a Jesuit. Had they not laid at the door of the Jesuits the great fire, and even the plague, which the populace, as usual, attributed to the poisoning of the waters? Not an act of sacerdotal zeal but fell under the ban of the laws, which no longer respected even the prerogatives of the peerage, the most inviolable of the dignities of the nation.* Death was the punishment for any English

* In the space of two months, seven Catholic peers called the atten-

subject convicted of having received orders from a Catholic bishop; imprisonment for having assisted at mass, be it in the chapel of an ambassador, or even in that of the queen. This queen, Catherine of Braganza, was, like the duchess, a pious Catholic; so that the three persons nearest the English throne professed the proscribed religion: strange situation and full of instability. The weak Charles II. himself had secretly abjured Protestantism.* Poor prince! he waited till death to do honor to his belief, and the more he feared to be suspected of being a Catholic, the more severe were the measures he permitted against the Church; and the consequence was, a reign dishonored by nameless atrocities, worthy of the worst days of Elizabeth and Henry VIII.

To this perilous post was Father de la Colombière sent from his humble residence in Paray; there, above all, he had need of the counsel and encouragement of his Blessed friend, which were not unseasonable, as we shall see. There he commenced, in presence of heresy, to fulfill the sweet engagements he had contracted with the Sacred Heart of Jesus; that Heart, the liberality and tenderness of which he then knew so much better than before.

Arrived at London, October 15, 1676, and becoming the guest of the palace of St. James, he prepared to live like a true Religious, apart from the tumult and magnificence of the court. Of this royal habitation he wished to know only the apartment of the Duchess. Under his windows was one of the most beautiful views in London; he always refused to enjoy it, and even refrained from

tion of the House to the rigorous measures which had been taken against them. See Lingard, &c.

* Inedited documents at the *Gesu*, commented on with much interest by Father F. Dumas, throw much light on the Catholicism of Charles II.

ever visiting the monuments of this great city. He cast far from him all that savored of delicacy or luxury. A mattress spread on the ground served him for a bed, and he redoubled his habitual austerities. His rules, to which he was so strictly bound, were his great consolation; he observed them as faithfully as if he were in a house of the Institute. "I find in them," he wrote, "so much good that it seems to me that if I should be on a desert isle, at the end of the world, I should desire no other succor, provided God gave me grace to observe them faithfully. O, holy rules! blessed is he who knows how to keep you in his heart, and realizes how advantageous you are." After ten months' sojourn in London, he wrote to his brethren: "In the midst of the entire corruption heresy has produced in this great city, I find much fervor, and very strong virtue, in many instances; a great harvest ready to be gathered, and which falls under the hand God is pleased to make use of: I serve a princess who is good in every sense, of most exemplary piety and great sweetness. For the rest, I am no more disturbed by the tumult of a court than if I were in a desert; and I can be as regular as if I were in one of our houses."

He preached two Lents before Mary Beatrice, besides every Sunday and feast for eighteen months. If he could not always shield his humility from applause, he received it with a coldness which immediately stifled it, and he added to the vows he had already made, that of never saying any thing that could tend to his own praise. The zeal which devoured him would permit him no repose. "He found in London," says a contemporary, "new subjects to exercise the sublime virtues he had made it incumbent on himself to practise, and his desire to share the troubles that menaced the Catholics of Eng-

land was a spur to his ardor for the service of God. Whoever would write his actions would not be at a loss for great things to recount, if he related the effects of his zeal, prudence, and piety; if he spoke of the apostates he won back to the Church, the Catholics he drew from the world, the impious he touched by his strong and wise discourses. What he undertook, the whole success of his enterprise, and all the consequences of his ministry, would form a beautiful theme for his biographer."

Unfortunately, his history has not been written; but this testimony of a contemporary shows how great were the labors of the apostolic man; and we sufficiently see that they were abundantly blessed by heaven, when we hear Margaret Mary, in the Litany she composed for him, and which she recited after his death, style him: *Voice of an Apostle; Shield of the Catholic Faith; Scourge of Heretics;* and tell us that "he had employed all his eloquence in proclaiming the greatness of God, converting sinners to penance, and attracting heretics to the true Church."

The great and continual pain of Father de la Colombière in London, was to live in a country where the God of the Eucharist was subjected to so many outrages. The *Test Oath*, so oppressive to the consciences of Catholics, attacked directly the dogma of transubstantiation and the real presence. If martyrs and confessors were not wanting to render testimony to the most august of mysteries, neither, alas! were apostates and deserters of the altar! At the sight of these scandals, which filled him with sadness, the man of God recalled all that Jesus Christ expected of him to console His Heart, all that had been recommended to him by the instrumentality of the Blessed Margaret Mary; and in thejournal of the spiritual retreat he made at London, 1677, he wrote:—

"Finishing this retreat, full of confidence in the mercy of my God, I have made a resolution to procure, by every possible means, the execution of what my Divine Master has ordered concerning the devotion He has suggested to a person to whom he communicates Himself. I have already spread this devotion among several people in England. In this country, where it is made a point of honor to doubt of the real presence in the august Sacrament of the Altar, I feel much satisfaction in making acts of faith therein, many times a day. I have written to France to beseech one of my friends to introduce the devotion to the Heart of Jesus wherever he may be. God has willed in the execution of His designs to make use of my feeble endeavors. Would that I could be omnipresent, O my God, to publish to Thy praise what Thou dost expect of Thy servants and friends!

"God having revealed His will to that person, whom we have reason to believe to be according to His own Heart by the great graces He has bestowed on her, she explained it to me, and I obliged her to write down what she told me, of which I have given a general idea in this journal of my retreat, because God has been pleased to make use of my weakness for the furtherance of His design."

Here follows in detail the revelation made to Sister Margaret during the Octave of Corpus Christi, and which we have given in the preceding chapter. Below it, the Father renews the offering he had made of himself to the Heart of Jesus, and finishes by this beautiful invocation:—

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, teach me perfect oblivion of self, since that is the only way by which we can enter Thee; grant that I may do nothing unworthy of Thee; teach me what I ought to do to attain to the purity of

Thy love, which Thou hast inspired me to desire. I feel within me a great will to please Thee, and a great impotence to accomplish this without particular light and help, which I can expect only of Thee. Accomplish Thy will in me, O Lord; I may resist, unhappily, but I should wish never to oppose it. It is for Thee to do all, Divine Heart of Jesus. Thou alone shalt have all the glory of my sanctification if I become a saint; this is clearer to me than the day; but it would be for Thee a great glory, and it is for that alone that I desire perfection. Amen."

Preaching on the Feast of Corpus Christi, in the chapel of St. James, he showed, in the most pathetic language, that the Son of God acted like a true lover in the adorable mystery of the altar, where He forgets in some manner His own interests, so passionately does He desire to unite Himself to us, enduring a thousand injuries from bad Catholics and heretics. "When I consider," he exclaimed, "Jesus Christ on our altars in the humble and obscure state in which He deigns to dwell there, and then reflect on the immense glory which He enjoys since His ascension, He appears to me like a great prince who, having attained by his valor and merit to the first crown in the universe, preserves on the throne the inclinations of his earlier days; he tears himself daily from a beautiful and numerous court, and, in attire which completely disguises him, goes without noise or equipage to visit her whom he loves." Constrained by the ingratitude of men, who respond to so much love only by indifference or contempt: "What dost Thou do, O my Lord," he asks, "to vanquish such incredible obstinacy? Thou hast exhausted Thyself in this mystery of love, Thou hast gone, say the Fathers, to the limits of Thy power; if the sacred touch of Thy Body cannot destroy the charms of hell, what can destroy them?" Suddenly he is ravished;

the Heart of Jesus seems to him a supreme remedy for this desperate state; he goes on: "I see but one resource for so great an evil: Thou must, O my God, give us another heart, a tender heart, a sensitive heart, a heart not of bronze or marble; Thou must give us a heart like Thine own, or rather Thine own Heart. Come, loving Heart of Jesus, come into my heart, kindle therein a love which can if possible respond to Thy love, to the obligations I have to love God. Love Jesus in me as much as Thou hast loved Him in Himself; grant that I may live only in Him; only for Him, that eternally I may live with Him in heaven. Amen."

Thus was inaugurated in the bosom of this heretical nation the apostolate of the Heart of Jesus. "Our ancestors," says an illustrious English convert, "showed themselves unworthy of the grace God offered them in calling them to the signal honor of being the first people to whom was preached the love of the Heart of Jesus."*

But, to-day, what a wonderful change! the Heart of Jesus has found among this same people many hearts responsive to its appeal; and the former scholar of Exeter preaching in the chapel of the London Oratory on Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is he not himself a conquest of this Divine Heart, and one of the most consoling examples of the way in which it loves to revenge itself, and triumph over its enemies? Courage, then! generous Colombière; do not sow in tears; one day this land so long, sterile and so deeply ravaged by heresy, will bear fruits which shall be sweet to the Heart of Jesus; and thy name, which it was vainly sought to cover with

* *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. With an Introduction on the History of Jansenism*, by John Bernard Dalgairns, Priest of the Oratory. This work has been translated into French by M. l'Abbé Poulide.

opprobrium, will be there held in benediction, with that of the humble virgin whose worthy co-operator thou wert in the accomplishment of the merciful designs of the Saviour of men.

Margaret had given him on his departure written instructions, dictated by the Holy Spirit, from which he drew great profit in the embarrassments of his new position. She occasionally communicated to him the lights she received from heaven concerning him. He, on his part, continued from afar her direction, but he rarely wrote to her, having in view rather to keep her in humble sentiments of herself than to enlighten her. As he at the same time kept up a correspondence with Mother de Saumaise, through whose hands all their letters passed, this wise Superior is a sure guarantee of the truth of the facts we are about to relate, and which she herself consigned to writing after the death of Sister Margaret Mary.

The billet which Father de la Colombière received the moment he quitted Paray, contained, among others, the following points:

1. The talent of Father de la Colombière is to lead souls to God, hence the demons will strive against him; even persons who are consecrated to God will give him trouble, and will not approve of what he will say in his sermons to conduct them; but in these crosses the goodness of God will be his support, so long as he confides in Him entirely.

2. He ought to have a compassionate gentleness for sinners, and use severity toward them *only* when God shall direct him to do so.

3. Let him beware of drawing goods from their source; this sentence is short, but it contains much of which God will discover to him the meaning, according to the application he may use to find it out.

This memorandum was carefully preserved by the holy priest.

In the retreat he made in London, toward the end of January, 1677, he repassed in his mind these counsels, from which he had already drawn great profit, and he found that the first point was only partially accomplished; for, if the devil had spread dangerous snares before him, he had suffered nothing from persons consecrated to God. He thought he ought to explain himself on this point to Mother de Saumaise. Margaret, whom Mother de Saumaise informed of this, replied that it would soon happen; and, in effect, the Father shortly after wrote to Mother de Saumaise:—

"It is not without reason that you inform me that our dear Sister Alacoque confirms what was contained in the first article of the first paper given me on my departure. I had need of this just when you sent it; on account of the ecclesiastic who condemned me, concerning what I said to draw souls to God. It was the only thing of which I had not up to this time seen the accomplishment; but now it has happened as she predicted. In the case of the person I mentioned to you, as having given himself to God, without its having cost me any thing, I remembered it, thank God, most opportunely, on the very first occasion; it helped much to give me confidence, for I was strongly tempted to abandon every thing for fear of an outbreak, which might give scandal and wound charity."

It was the same with regard to the other two counsels, which are in appearance only general, but which he afterwards found to suit exactly his present and special necessities. For a long time, he could not comprehend the sense of these words:—*Beware of drawing goods from their source.* It was in his retreat that he learned it. God asked him to sacrifice a pension he received from his

family, and which would be of great assistance to him under his present circumstances. Besides, he had made a special vow to limit the use and determine the employment of this money. Reflecting on the above words, a sudden light penetrated his mind, and showed him in his pension dangers he had not yet perceived, making him fear to separate himself from the perfection of religious poverty. He immediately resolved to renounce it, as being the most generous and the surest step to take; and having done so, he experienced great interior joy, as may be seen by his journal. Thus he wrote soon after to Mother de Saumaise :—

"I cannot express to you the great treasures I have discovered in this little memorandum (from Sister Margaret Mary), it would take me too long. But what I can say is, that if the evil spirit dictated it, it would be greatly contrary to himself, seeing that from it I have derived such great assistance, that it has produced in me all the effects the Holy Spirit is accustomed to produce."

In a letter of the following year, 1678, he says :—

"I do not believe that without the note containing the advice of Sister Alacoque, I could have borne the pains I have suffered, and which never attacked me more violently than when I was pressed and overburdened with work."

On one occasion, Mother de Saumaise kept the paper Margaret had given her for Father Colombière. But, perceiving by letters she received from him that he was in want of the advice contained in the billet, she determined to send it. As she was copying it out, without having mentioned the matter to any one, the Sister came to her and said, that since the letter was about to be forwarded, it should not be changed. Greatly astonished, Mother de Saumaise perused it; and, comparing it with

the original, found that she had accidentally made some changes which were not unimportant. This letter, like its predecessors, was of great assistance to the holy missionary; he wrote soon after, saying he had received it just at the right time, and that, but for its succor, he knew not what he should have done.

Fortified by the advice and prayers of this holy soul, there was nothing he was not disposed to do and suffer for the glory of God. His letters to Mother de Saumaise show us in him the most active and ardent zeal united, by a prodigy of grace, to the recollection of a soul in which God ceases not to be intimately present. An admirable change was effected in his interior, and it is good to allude to it here, to the end that a great number may be excited to lose themselves in that abyss of pure love wherein nothing perishes. Ah! how well should they then comprehend the saying of Jesus Christ: "*Whoever loseth his soul shall find it*," and deem execrable the reserves too commonly made with such a good and generous Master! "*The prudence of the flesh*," says the Apostle, "*is death*;" and again: "*Whoever wisheth to become truly wise, let him become a fool!*"

Previous to his arrival at Paray, in the retreat in which he engaged himself by vow to the observance of all the rules, Father de la Colombière had made the following reflections: "When I consider the second of our rules, I find not in myself a zeal sufficiently great for the salvation of souls; it seems to me that I have experienced more zeal at other times. I know not if I be deceived, but I believe that what cools me in this point is, the fear lest in employments of zeal I should seek myself; for it seems to me that nature often finds its account under pretext of the glory of God: there is need of a great grace and strength to resist the pleasure experienced in

changing hearts, and receiving confidential communications. Regarding what is ordinarily frightful to nature, as prisons, continual maladies, even death itself, all *that* seems sweet to me, in comparison with the constant war to be maintained against self, vigilance against the surprises of the world and self-love, this living death in the midst of the world. When I ponder these things, I feel that life is terribly long, and that death can never come too soon."

Well, it would be too bad could it be said that so faithful a servant remained till the end under the influence of such discouraging thoughts. After the first combats, Jesus Christ, to whom he had given himself unreservedly, changed his heart, dilating and enlarging it, and at the same time fortifying it against the seductions of the world and self-love. Ah! how different and how much more perfect are the dispositions he finds within him in London, amid the very perils which he dreaded more than death! Here is what he wrote in his retreat of 1677:—

"I find in myself a disposition quite opposed to that which I had two years since: fear entirely occupied me, and I was deterred from exercises of zeal by the apprehension that I could not save myself in the snares of the active life in which I saw myself about to be engaged, according to my vocation. To-day, that fear has vanished, and all within me excites me to labors for the salvation of souls. This alone makes me love life, and I love holiness only because it is an admirable means of drawing many souls to Jesus Christ my Saviour."

He wrote at the end of his journal:—

"When I am all alone, I feel, by the great mercy of God, a liberty of heart that causes me incomparable joy. I find myself raised above all the kings of the earth by

the honor I have of belonging to God. I feel that it would be better to know and love Him than to reign; and though I should sometimes have ambitious or vainglorious thoughts, it is certain that all the glory of the world, apart from the knowledge and love of God, could not tempt me."

Blessed state, attained only by those who abandon themselves entirely to God, and have no reserves with Him; state of felicity and unalterable peace; true liberty of the children of God!

This total and unreserved abandonment Father Colombière brought about in himself. In the beginning *he feared*, and this even after his heroic sacrifice; but finally, thanks to the pressing instances made him by the mouth of Margaret Mary, a day came when he cast himself into the Heart of Jesus; and henceforth, freed from all fear, from all pusillanimity, he experienced the truth of that saying of the Holy Ghost: "*To serve God is to reign.*" Great lesson for apostolic men, for all who labor, no matter in what capacity, for the salvation of souls, in the sublime and holy work of the conversion of sinners. To them—as we shall see—are addressed the most pressing invitations and the most magnificent promises of the Heart of Jesus, which aspires to reign entirely over them, to reduce by means of them all hearts to its sweet empire.

CHAPTER XIV.

Margaret Mary as a Victim.—St. Francis de Sales complains to her of his Degenerate Daughters.—He warns and threatens.—The New Sect, —Jansenism.—Occurrences on the Eve and Feast of the Presentation. —Extract from a Letter of Father de la Colombière.

While she sustained this apostolic man by the virtue of her prayers and the light of her counsels, Blessed Margaret Mary was for her Sisters a sign to be contradicted, and became more and more like Him who *was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins.* Called as she was to manifest to men the ineffable sufferings of the Heart of Jesus, it was necessary that she should participate more than others in the chalice of His Passion; it was fitting that she should follow the steps of her Adorable Master, not only to the Garden to witness His Dolorous Agony, but also to the house of Pilate and the house of Herod, where He was mocked and satiated with opprobrium. Soon we shall see the Servant of God clothed in the eyes of her Sisters with the white robe of a fool; sublime folly, which was but the folly of the Cross!

Our Lord had asked her, from her entrance, whether she would not be satisfied to suffer all sorts of pain, as much for her own sins as for the sins of her Sisters, that by her means He might be glorified in all these souls; and she immediately offered herself to suffer, if possible, till the day of judgment, as much as was neces-

sary to satisfy His Sovereign Majesty. He had said, a few days before her profession, that He had brought her to this house to satisfy His irritated justice. "My God," she had replied, "make known to me what has irritated Thy justice?" And He showed her that it was sins hidden from the eyes of creatures, but not hidden from His. In fine, three months after her holy profession, the Feast of St. Francis de Sales being near, the holy Founder made her understand that the virtues he wished to see his daughters remarkable for were charity and humility; the first to unite them perfectly to God, the second to unite them intimately to the neighbor; adding, that several of them were far from the perfection of these virtues, to the great prejudice of his Institute. He reproached them above all for particular friendships, which were injurious to silence, and ruinous to charity; for being too much inclined to forget their own defects, and judge unfavorably of the intentions of their neighbors; finally, for too great complacency towards creatures, which could only be remedied by constant vigilance and loving severity. "I will come on the day of my festival," said he, "to make choice of my true daughters, who possess my spirit, and I will write them in my heart, to offer them incessantly at the throne of the Majesty of God, as an odor of sweetness to supply for the imperfect."

The Feast of St. Francis de Sales—we know not whether it was this year, 1672—as she asked of Our Lord, through the intercession of this great saint, the graces necessary for the Institute, especially the holy union and charity he desired for his nuns, her request having been several times rejected, she cried out: "My God, I will not leave Thee till Thou hast granted me this favor, which I shall never cease to ask while I have voice and

movement." Our Lord replied: "I promise to hear thy petition if My commands be obeyed, that each seriously enter into herself and search out whatever may be an obstacle to My grace. One of the greatest obstacles is a certain little jealousy, and envy of one another, a secret coldness which destroys charity, and renders My graces useless. But some of them, on this day, will receive the last efforts of My graces." The holy Founder said in his turn: "A true daughter of the Visitation ought to be a living victim, in imitation of Jesus Christ, and to think of herself only to extinguish all the false lights which enlighten us only to precipitate us. All who are not in this disposition are not counted among my daughters." These last words would not apparently apply to the monastery of Paray, where error had not been introduced; but, remarkable fact, there was at that very time a monastery of the Order which Jansenism sought to penetrate, and with but too much success, and it is difficult not to recognize in the influence it henceforth exercised in that house, and which was to be extended to several other houses (as we shall subsequently see), the false lights of which the holy Founder spoke to his dear daughter, and against which he sought to guard the Religious of Paray. It is certain that if the spirit of pride be once introduced into a community, however fervent, it might easily become the prey of Jansenism. Behold the danger menaced in the reiterated warnings of Our Saviour, and the holy Founder of the Visitation; and this danger, ever present, was to be avoided by a most intimate union with the sweetest and humblest of all hearts, the Heart of the Man-God, Son of the Immaculate Virgin Mary.

Oh! how much it cost Blessed Margaret to abandon herself entirely to be a victim of immolation, and serve to accomplish the merciful designs of the Saviour of men!

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"I seek a victim," said He to her, "I seek a victim for My Heart." Penetrated with the greatness of His Sovereign Majesty, she humbly prostrated herself at His feet, and presented Him several holy souls who, as she thought, would correspond faithfully to His designs. But He said: "No, I will not choose any but thee."

Then, bathed in tears, she replied that she was only a criminal, and that victims ought to be innocent; that in truth she had no other will than His, but that she would not promise any thing but what her Superior permitted. To this He consented.

Toward autumn, 1677, she was furnished with an occasion of making a sacrifice of herself to His irritated justice. We relate this memorable circumstance almost in her own words, completing her recital by the constant traditions preserved to our time in the community of Paray-le-Monial.

"I wish to give thee My Heart," said the Saviour to her. "But first, thou must render thyself its victim of immolation, to turn away by thy interposition the chastisements My Divine Father is ready to exercise in His anger on a religious community." This community Margaret has not designated, through regard for her Sisters, it being that of Paray.

At the same moment, Our Lord made her see that house, with all the particular defects which had irritated God against it, and all that she herself would have to suffer to appease His wrath. At this representation, all within her trembled; she had not courage to sacrifice herself. She replied, as we have already seen, that she could do nothing but by obedience. But the fear of being obliged to sacrifice herself made her neglect to speak of it. Incessantly pursued by Our Lord, she no

longer had any repose. She went tearfully to open her heart to Mother de Saumaise, who directed her to abandon herself unreservedly to God's pleasure. "At this order," wrote she, "my pain redoubled, for I had not courage to say *yes*, and I continually resisted my God." It was the eve of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, a day marked by the renovation of vows, for which it was customary to prepare by a more strict observance of silence and greater assiduity at prayer. Yet it must be said the imperfect Religious of whom Our Lord complained, had not brought to this preparation all the requisite dispositions. Several of them reproached Mother de Saumaise with some infraction of the usages of the house, forgetting that they themselves, by their temerity in condemning their Superior, gave a species of scandal far more dangerous than that which their pharisaical zeal so loudly condemned. The Mother, who was then ill, was in the infirmary; her absence contributed, it may be, to render more bold those who excited each other to speak against her. In a word, a cloud overhung the monastery; hearts were embittered; indiscreet murmurs, and uncharitable purposes, circulated through the cloister and the other places of reunion.

Our Lord, who wished to use Margaret Mary to draw these poor wanderers back to sentiments more worthy of their vocation, and more conformable to the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, ceased not to pursue this innocent victim, and say to her as He said formerly to St. Paul: "*It is hard for thee to kick against the goad;* but since thou hast made so much resistance to avoid the humiliations thou shouldst suffer, I will double them. I asked of thee only a secret sacrifice; now I will have a public one, in a manner and at a time of which human reason will comprehend nothing, and in circumstances so humili-

ating that they will be for thee a subject of confusion for the rest of thy life."

What did this Divine Saviour require of her? That she should go to the Superior and denounce the culpable irritation of her companions. It was the lot of the young Joseph, like her, to be treated as a dreamer and a visionary when, like her, too, urged by the Spirit of God, he informed his father of the iniquity of his brothers, thereby exposing himself to all the consequences of their bitter resentment.

After prayer, she did not leave the choir with the rest, but remained there in tears and sighs till the ringing of the bell; then she dragged herself to the refectory, resolved to say aloud, during the collation, all that God directed; she first went to the infirmary to seek Mother de Saumaise. She was so transported, that it seemed to her she was dragged with cords to the place of her suffering. She saw the sanctity of God armed against her with revengeful darts, and hell open beneath her feet ready to swallow her. A devouring fire had pierced to the marrow of her bones; she trembled violently all over. From time to time she exclaimed: "My God, have pity on me, according to the greatness of Thy mercy." Sinking under the weight of her sorrow, she could not proceed. One of the Sisters, finding her in this state about eight o'clock, led her to Mother de Saumaise, who, knowing that obedience alone had power over the spirit that governed her, ordered her to speak. She did so, yet without explaining any thing in particular, "fearing," says she, "to wound charity, and at the same time the Heart of Jesus, which is the source of it."

When the Superior learned all, she hesitated not to fulfil the rigorous duty the Spirit of God imposed on her, and directed that, to expiate these culpable murmurs,

each Sister should take, that very evening, the discipline.

We may imagine the dismay that followed such an order, sent to persons already so ill-disposed, and whose immortification had rendered this severity necessary. Their first impulse is to run to Margaret Mary, whose conduct appears very strange to them—very strange, indeed, inexplicable, and contrary to all the customs of the common life, and even to charity. They surrounded her, they questioned her; she made no reply. They led her, or rather dragged her with effort from room to room, hoping to obtain some clue to the affair, but she continued mute, and, so to say, stupid in their presence. This was in some manner her night in the Pretorium, and she had this conformity with Him in whose Name the prophet had said: *Like a deaf man, I heard not, and I was like the dumb who open not the mouth.* "It now seems to me," said she, "that though all the sufferings I had till then, and all I subsequently had, were reunited, they would not be comparable to what I endured that night. Our Lord willed thus to gratify His poor creature, that she might honor by that night the dolorous night of His Passion."

Next morning, assisting at Mass, she heard, after Holy Communion, these words: "At length peace is established, and My holiness of justice is satisfied by the sacrifice thou hast made to Me, to honor that which I made the moment of My Incarnation in the womb of My Mother. I will join the merit of thy sacrifice to Mine, and apply it in favor of charity, as thou mayest see. Henceforth, thou shouldst not consider thyself in what thou shalt do or suffer; but sacrifice all to Me for charity; therefore, in imitation of Me, thou shalt act and suffer in silence, without any interest but the glory of God, and

for the establishment of the reign of the Sacred Heart in the hearts of men, to whom I will manifest Myself by thy instrumentality."

But Our Lord, for a considerable time, continued to please Himself in this suffering state, in which she regarded herself as the refuse of the community, and in which, no longer able to speak, eat, or sleep, her sweetest occupation was to remain prostrate in the presence of her God, whose sovereign greatness profoundly annihilated her, always weeping, and sighing for mercy, and entreating that He would turn away the arrows of His just vengeance.

Her health was greatly impaired. No longer would her stomach bear any nourishment, and the order she received to eat whatever was given her, served only to augment her pains. It happened even that some of the Sisters, believing her possessed or obsessed by the demon, threw holy water on her. "But," says she, with much frankness, "He who possessed me, far from flying, would unite Himself more closely to me, saying: 'I love holy water, and I cherish the Cross so much that I cannot avoid uniting Myself to souls who bear it like Me, and for love of Me.'"

At length, Mother de Saumaise desired her to offer a Communion to obtain of Our Lord that He would restore her to her ordinary state. She then presented herself to Him as His host of immolation, and she heard Him say: "Yes, My daughter, I come to thee as thy sovereign sacrifice; I will give thee new vigor, but only to immolate thee by new sacrifices." At that moment all was changed, and she felt like a slave restored to liberty. But this exposed her to another suffering, more cruel perhaps; for these changes, so sudden and extraordinary, gave rise to the opinion that the malign spirit was the author of

all that passed within her, consequently she was obliged to combat against the Sovereign Spirit who ruled her; a violent struggle ensued which completely overpowered her. "My Sovereign," said she, "rejoiced at my resistance, He reassured me and dissipated all my fears, saying: 'What hast thou to fear in the arms of the Omnipotent? Can He permit thee to perish or abandon thee to thy enemies? I have been thy Father, thy Master, and thy Director, from thy tenderest youth; I have given thee continual proofs of the affection of My Heart, in which I have placed thy dwelling. Tell Me, what stronger proof of My love thou desirest, and I will give it to thee. But why wilt thou contend against Me, who am thy true and only friend?'"

These reproaches greatly confused her, and she resolved not to contribute actively any more to the proofs made of the spirit that governed her. But a cloud was spread over her admirable virtues; she had become for the greater number of her Sisters, if not a stumbling-block, at least a problem, and they even cautioned each other against what had, in any other house, seemed an infallible mark of true sanctity: "This love of the Cross," say contemporary Religious, "appeared somewhat suspicious to many, and began to diminish the esteem they formerly had of her virtues; they learned only after her death the graces she had received from Our Lord. Nevertheless, the community in general had great confidence in her, considering her as a soul very agreeable to God, whom each in particular could consult in her necessities. Though the sentiments regarding her were so varied, yet all felt persuaded of her virtue."

These words explain well, it seems, the species of uncertainty in which the community was regarding the Spirit that directed this Sister. Her companions thought

her virtuous, but deluded. Mother de Saumaise was, perhaps, the only person fully reassured; but her opinions were not shared by the Directors of the house, who were not so enlightened as was Father de la Colombière. He, informed of all by this wise Superior, who knew the whole interior of this dear child, adored the impenetrable designs of God, and wrote to her from London about this time:—

"I rejoice at the graces Our Lord continues to bestow *on her whose name you have effaced from your letter;* I rejoice still more at the share you have had in them; these are true favors, to suffer for justice and for the glory of the Divine Master. O excellent crosses, how highly should you be prized by all souls whom God replenishes with His love!"

CHAPTER XV.

Mother de Saumaise returns to Dijon.—Peronne Rosalie Greyffié.—She is sent to Paray.—Letter.—Character of Mother Greyffié.—Her Relations with Margaret Mary.—Death of Sister Elizabeth Quarré.—Incidents.—Deposition of Sister Dusson.

Mother de Saumaise, elected for the first time in 1672, re-elected in 1675, finished her second triennial, the last term fixed for the exercise of her office, the constitutions having wisely provided that no monastery of the Visitation should remain more than six consecutive years under the same Superior. Toward the middle of the year 1678, the Religious of Paray, convoked for a new election, turned toward the holy source of Annecy, and united their suffrages on Mother Peronne Rosalie Greyffié, a professed nun of that House. She was a lady of merit, who, having entered religion very young, had learned to know and love the Institute from Mothers Blonay and de Chaugy, illustrious companions of St. Jane Frances. Placed, a little before, at the head of the monastery of Thonon, she had then returned to Annecy, where she fulfilled the important charge of mistress of novices. In giving her full approbation to so worthy a choice, her Superior, Mother Mary Amy de Rabutin, wrote to the nuns of Paray as follows:—

"My very dear Sisters, it is a true sacrifice and a rending of my heart to give to your petitions my honored

Sister the *Deposée** of Thonon, our present worthy Directress; she is a person of distinction, who possesses perfectly the spirit of strength and sweetness proper to her government, an upright and sincere soul, profoundly humble, very exact as to observance. Indeed, my dear Sisters, I must love very much your dear house, else I could not send from me this dear Religious, with whom, I feel convinced, you will be perfectly content, as her preceding good conduct gives every reason to hope."

Arrived at Paray, June 17, 1678, Mother Greyffié surpassed all the hopes that had been conceived of her. All were delighted to find in her "a solid mind, a heart full of tenderness for all her daughters, and an enlightened vigilance over the healthy and the sick." "She was," as we read in a memorial from Paray to Annecy, "a person of indefatigable charity toward the sick and the depressed, employing her days and nights in consoling the one and the other, sacrificing to them her most precious moments. She was always the first at every exercise, especially at the holy office, at which she was all fire and flames, so that she could not control her good and beautiful voice. When she held her chapters, she presided with such zeal and unction, that she brought about whatever that same zeal inspired her with. It was very consoling to speak confidently to her. Never did any one leave her without being touched and animated: very enlightened and very interior, she directed each according to her respective attraction."

All this she admirably proved in her government of Margaret Mary. At their first interview she saw, as she herself said, in her beautiful scriptural style, that Our Lord wished this dear child "to be the harvest of myrrh."

* Among the French Visitandines, a Sister who has been Superior is styled, after her retirement from the office, *La Deposée*.—Trans.

Thus she spared her no trials—testimony of her strong and courageous tenderness, which disavows all vulgar ideas in the matter of affection. Besides, seeing the community divided, she felt it her duty to place beyond doubt the spirit that governed her blessed daughter. Father de la Colombière was not present to reassure her, and his successors saw things in a different light. She reserved her judgment then, thinking it best to leave to God the care of manifesting the truth, and that, in any case, it would be most profitable for the Sister to remain in abasement and obscurity. "Finding myself," says she, "without experience and without help to direct her in these extraordinary ways, I diffided a little, indeed a good deal, in the assurances Sister Margaret gave me, that Our Lord would make me act according to His holy will in her regard. In this way I followed fearlessly my natural inclination, which loves peace and tranquillity, to maintain which I appeared to pay no attention to the extraordinary things that passed within this holy child. I did not notice her to any person, within or without. If it happened that she did something which gave displeasure, even though it were by my order, or with my permission, I suffered her to be blamed for it, and I blamed her myself."* This treatment was the climax of Margaret's happiness. She wrote to Mother de Saumaise, who had returned to Dijon: "I must tell you, for your consolation, that God has given me a true mother, all goodness and charity for me." And Mother de Saumaise, worthy of comprehending such language, participated largely in her joy. These things cannot be judged by the ideas of the world; they seem folly to it, because it has no intelligence of that which proceeds from the Spirit of God.

Mother Greyffié applied herself first to know the inte-

* Mother Greyffié's Memoir of Margaret Mary. MS.

rior of her dear child. Not content with conversing frequently with her, she wrote to her, and invited her to explain, by writing, the state of her soul. The nature of this intimate intercourse may be seen by the billets that remain to us. "I promise you," wrote the Superior, "that I will gladly humble and mortify you in all occasions, because you have need of these helps; it is charity to give them to you, and I desire the good of your soul. Let not that, however, prevent you from coming to me or writing to me as you may desire; I shall be always delighted to serve you; your soul is dear to mine, despite all that may render it displeasing, burdensome, or importunate. We must imitate the heavenly Father, who bestows His favors without any merit on your part." Margaret ceased not to ask for penances. "She would have massacred her poor body, if I had allowed her," says Mother Greyffié, "with vigils, disciplines and macerations." Then this good Mother addressed to her these words, which betray all the delicacy of her affection: "Tell Our Lord to give me less compassion for your sufferings, or to give you more health." But, to keep her in humility, she immediately added: "Or, let Him dispense me from treating you according to your demerits, when you give cause to correct or humble you." These occasions were not wanting, since both parties sought them so eagerly.

During the retreat Sister Margaret Mary made toward the middle of autumn, 1678, Our Lord favored her with extraordinary graces, and as she delighted in the abundance of divine consolations, He said to her: "Eat and drink at the table of My delights, to refresh thyself, that thou mayest walk courageously; for thou hast a long and painful road to travel; thou shalt often be obliged to breathe and repose in My Heart, which will always be open to thee while thou walkest in these ways." He

told her that if sinners should persecute her, she must take refuge in His Heart, and that he would make of her an instrument to draw all hearts to His love. To which she replied: "I cannot comprehend, my God, how that can be done."—"By My power, which has made all things out of nothing." He afterwards exhorted her to plunge herself more and more in her nothingness, considering herself only as a tool which the workman uses at his pleasure, and to which the work belongs not. He recommended to her exact observance of rule, purity of heart, abandonment to His love. "Thou shalt want help," said He, "only when My Heart wants power." He promised to revenge or recompense all that should be done to her, good or evil. "I have still," continued He, "a rude and heavy cross to lay on thy weak shoulders, but I am powerful enough to sustain thee: fear nothing, leave me to do what I will with thee, and do thou nothing either to hide thyself in contempt or to show thyself in esteem. I shall permit Satan to tempt thee only by the three temptations with which he had the hardihood to tempt Me: but fear not; I am thy protection and thy caution. I have established My reign of peace in thy heart; no one shall disturb it; and the reign of My love in thy heart, which will give thee a joy that no man can take from thee."

Shortly after, as she was in great pain, Our Lord gave her a faithful guardian, an angel detached from His throne, to accompany her everywhere, assist her in all emergencies, and hinder the enemy from prevailing against her. She saw him visibly, except when God hid his sensible presence to plunge her into the rigorous pains of His sanctity of Justice. Then this celestial spirit consoled her by his familiar discourses. One day, she heard him say these words:—"I wish to tell you

who I am, that you may know the love your Spouse bears you. I am one of those nearest the throne of the Divine Majesty, who share most in the ardors of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and it is designed to communicate them to you, inasmuch as you are capable of receiving them." He taught her to guard against the artifices of Satan, who to deceive her could transform himself into an angel of light; and to chase him from her presence by these words: *Per signum crucis*, &c. "Take care," said he, another time, "that no grace or familiar caress you receive from your God, tempt you to forget what you are; for, otherwise, I myself should strive to annihilate you." When Our Lord honored her with His presence, she no longer perceived that of the angel, who then prostrated to render homage to His infinite greatness.

The more abased she was in the sight of her companions, the more God was pleased to elevate her, to draw her to Himself. By consolations of ineffable sweetness, but of short duration, He prepared her for the great combats she had yet to sustain for the Heart of Jesus.

What Mother Greyffié's thoughts were when the Sister disclosed these particular favors of heaven, she has not told us in her Memoirs. Without doubt, enlightened as she was, she did not contemn the action of God on this great soul. But, on the other hand, she was far from being dazzled by the extraordinary gifts that shone in the Blessed Margaret; far from it; she deemed it necessary to prove her more and more, without perhaps taking over much trouble to conform her conduct to that of her predecessor: she even went so far that she was soon obliged to repent of it: behold on what occasion:

Every week she saw the Sister pass a whole hour in prayer, on Thursday night, her arms in the form of a

cross, her face to the earth; a practice authorized by Mother de Saumaise, at the express command of Our Lord. At first she contented herself with interdicting this painful and injurious posture, hurtful, thought she, to her health; she told her in future to kneel with her hands joined. Then, growing bolder by degrees, she retrenched entirely this hour of prayer. Our Lord, appearing to be greatly irritated, said to the Sister, that He would know how in a sensible manner to revenge this contempt of His will; which, trembling all over, she communicated to the Superior, who, making no account of it, persisted in her decision. But some time after, Sister Elizabeth Quarré, who, as bursar, rendered great service to the monastery, was attacked with a malady which placed her in a few days beyond the reach of human remedies.* Nothing could be more sensible to Mother Greyffié, who tenderly loved that Sister. The circumstances of her speedy death, and other particulars which she remarked, but which, for reasons unknown to us, she has not explained, at length opened her eyes, and she herself says in her Memoir: "I quickly restored the hour of prayer to our holy defunct (Sister Margaret Mary), the thought strongly pursuing me that Sister Elizabeth's death was the punishment with which she, on the part of Our Lord, had threatened me."

Afterwards Margaret asked her for permission to spend before the Blessed Sacrament not only an hour, but all Holy Thursday night till Good Friday morning. She once obtained this permission, on recovering from a long sickness which had left her very languid. Thursday evening, toward half-past seven o'clock, she repaired to

* The mortuary register of the monastery dates this death, October 14, 1678.

choir; Friday morning, at the hour of Prime, her Sisters found her in the same spot, kneeling without any support, her hands joined, "immovable as a statue." She had spent all that time praying for herself, and for her "good friends," "the souls in purgatory." When asked for an account of her prayer, she simply answered that she had suffered much with Our Lord, that He had done her the favor of making her share in the pains of His agony in the garden, and that it seemed as if every moment her soul would be torn from her body, had not God and His love sustained her.

More than once during these hours of mysterious suffering, some of her companions, to try her obedience, whispered in her ear: "Sister, Mother wishes you to go warm yourself." She immediately rose, went to the community fire, at which she spent a quarter of an hour; she then returned to the choir, where she knelt as before.

"My Sister," said a Religious to her one day, "how can you remain so long in such a fatiguing posture?" To which she replied: "I know not whether I have a body during that time: so strongly do the sufferings of Jesus Christ occupy me that I cannot think of any thing else."

Some of the elder Sisters having reproached her with remaining too long in choir, she persuaded herself to defer to their opinions. But Our Lord was dissatisfied: "Learn," said He, "that if thou withdrawest from My presence, I will make thee and those who caused thee suffer. I will hide My presence from them, and when they seek Me they shall not find Me."

As to Mother Greyffié profiting of the severe lesson she had received, she henceforth showed herself more pliable to the will of Our Lord, manifested to her by this dear child. The Divine Master, toward the end of

the same year, having asked of His dear Spouse a sort of spiritual testament in His favor, by which she would abandon all to Him, this worthy Superior consented to prepare the authentic act, and to serve as a sort of notary. The act was couched in the following terms:

"Live Jesus in the heart of His Spouse, Sister Margaret Mary, for whom, and in virtue of the power God has given me over her, I offer, dedicate, and consecrate purely and inviolably to the Sacred Heart of the Adorable Jesus, all the goods she can possess during her life, and all that may be done for her after her death, that the Divine Heart may dispose of all according to its good pleasure, and in favor of any one it wishes, whether living or dead; Sister Margaret Mary protesting that she willingly despoils herself of all, except the will to be eternally united to the Divine Heart of her Jesus, and to love Him purely through love of Himself. In testimony of this, she and I sign this paper."

"Done on the last Day of December, 1678.

"Signed: Sister Peronne Rosalie Greyffié, *at present Supérior, and for whose conversion and final perseverance Sister Margaret Mary will daily pray.*"

Here follows the signature of Margaret, written with her blood:—"Sister Margaret Mary, *disciple of the Divine Heart of the Adorable Jesus.*"

At the end of this testament, the Sister wrote these words:

"My Divine Master testified to me great satisfaction at this act, and He told me He wished to dispose of it according to His designs, and in favor of whom He pleased; but that, since His love had despoiled me of all, He willed that I should no longer possess any riches but those of His Sacred Heart, of which He at the same

hour made me a donation, making me write in my blood, according to His dictation:

"'I constitute thee heir of My Heart, and of all its treasures for time and eternity, permitting thee to use them according to thy desire. I promise thee that thou shalt want succor only when I want power. Thou shalt be always the well-beloved disciple of that Heart, the sport of its good pleasure, and the holocaust of its love. It alone shall be the object of all thy desires; it will repair and supply thy defects, and acquit thee of thy obligations.'"

Having written this promise of the Son of God, she thought she ought to consummate this exchange by a courageous act of love, and bedew with her blood the holocaust. Worthy daughter of St. Chantal, who had given her the example of similar heroism, she took a pen-knife and engraved on her breast the adorable name of Jesus, in large, deep characters, without minding the pain which this excess of love occasioned her.

Our Lord promised to reward a hundred-fold all the good that should be done for her, regarding it as done to Himself, since she had made all over to Him. To Mother Greyffié, who had been, so to say, His deputy in this solemn act, He accorded the merits of St. Clare of Montefalco. If she had refused, the Sister would recur to Father de la Colombière, whom unexpected circumstances, of which we shall soon speak, had already brought from England. He did not come to Paray till March (1679). His presence then occasioned Margaret a very sensible mortification, to which Mother Greyffié contributed, and of which she has faithfully transmitted the remembrance. He strove to dissipate the last doubts of this prudent Superior: "Be sure," said he, "that humility, simplicity, and exact submission are never allied

with false virtue, and cannot be the result of the deceits of Satan."

However, the wounds Margaret had engraven on her breast, when she wrote there the name of Jesus, were closing up, and that this dear impression might never be effaced, she feared not to employ fire and iron, which caused intense pain, and left a profound gash. But, as she was about to enter retreat (some nine months later), she believed herself obliged in conscience to declare to the Superior the sad state to which this new species of suffering had reduced her. Fearing the consequences of the evil this dear child had so long endured, Mother Greyffié told her to show her wounds to the Sister-infirmarian, who would dress them. What a trial for the humility and delicate modesty of Margaret Mary! She complained amorously to her Celestial Spouse, saying:—

"O my only Love, wilt Thou suffer others to see the wounds I inflicted only for love of Thee? Art not Thou powerful enough to heal me—Thou, who art the sovereign remedy for all my troubles?"

Touched by her distress, this good Master promised that she should be healed, which effectually happened; next day there remained, instead of the wounds, only large cicatrices. She wished to inform the Superior of this, but could not see her. The infirmarian soon arrived, with a note from Mother Greyffié, ordering her to show her wounds. All the sentiments that had troubled her the day before returned, and clouded for a moment her exact and punctual obedience. She thought that as she had been healed, she was dispensed from obeying, or, at least, authorized to delay till she had spoken with her Mother. She thanked the infirmarian for her kindness, of which she did not avail herself for these reasons. Mother Greyffié admired this sudden cure, in which she

could not but see the finger of God; but it was a beautiful occasion to humble her dear and holy daughter. She testified great displeasure, deprived her that day of communion, which was "for her the greatest of all sacrifices." Finally, she ordered her to show her wounds to the infirmarian, who found them perfectly healed, but the outlines of them designated by a large purple stroke. All this was nothing to the punishment Our Lord inflicted on His Spouse. "At His feet," says she, "for about five days, I bitterly bewailed my disobedience, and sought to propitiate Him by continual penances." At length He came Himself to dry up her tears, and restore life to her soul, in the last days of the retreat: He made her comprehend on this occasion, in so lively a manner, what religious obedience is, that she acknowledged she had not before rightly understood it. "He told me," said she, "that in punishment of my fault, not only this last impression of His Sacred Name, which had cost me so much, should disappear, but even the preceding one, which till then had been very well delineated."

This new prodigy was authentically proved after the death of the Blessed Margaret Mary. The Religious of Paray, in performing the last duties for their venerable and illustrious Sister, sought in vain on the breast for the traces the fire and the iron should naturally have left there. Among those who made this search was Sister des Escures, the same who, in quality of infirmarian, had formerly executed the orders of Mother Greyffié, and remembered perfectly having seen on this blessed breast the Name of Jesus, *engraved in large characters, like those printed with type in great books.*

If Margaret Mary had failed on this delicate occasion, and borne the penalty of her failure, how many times was not her exact obedience recompensed by miraculous

favors! It may be said that nothing ever imposed on her was impossible to her; nature itself was vanquished, as the Superior said. Always ill or weak, a word from Mother Greyffié was sufficient to restore her strength, and enable her to fulfil all the exercises of the rule, till the day fixed by the obedience; for then she relapsed into her former state. This happened more than once, in sight of the whole community; and in testimony of it, we have not only the record of Mother Greyffié, but also the Memoir of Margaret Mary herself, who does violence to her humility to recount to her Director these extraordinary facts, which indeed it was impossible to hide from him. "Go, my Sister, take your rank in the retreat. I remit you to our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may direct, govern, and heal you, according to His will." Thus spoke Mother Greyffié one day to our Sister, then long confined to the infirmary, where she suffered grievously from fever. Without saying a word, she repaired to her cell; and there, while extended on the ground, chilled from head to foot, Our Lord appeared to her and raised her, saying: "Behold, thou art in My care. Hence, I will restore thee in perfect health to her who has put thee into My hands." At the same moment, the fever ceased; perfectly cured, she applied herself sweetly and peaceably to the holy exercises of retreat. Never was solitude more agreeable to her. "It seemed to me," said she to the Superior, "that I was in Paradise, so great was the multitude of favors, caresses, and familiarities I enjoyed, both from my Divine Master Jesus Christ, and from His Holy Mother, my good Angel, and my blessed Father, St. Francis."

Toward the end of an illness, which left her very weak, Mother Greyffié coming into the infirmary, she asked her, as it was Saturday or some vigil, to allow her to

rise next day and go to Mass; and as she saw that the Mother hesitated, penetrating her thoughts, she said: "My dear Mother, if you will, God also wills, and I shall obtain the necessary strength." Thereupon, the infirmarian is told to give her something to eat before rising, then to conduct her to Mass. But in the evening she tells the infirmarian that she wishes to go to Mass fasting, that she may communicate, hoping the Lord would give her sufficient strength. The infirmarian assented, and promised to regulate all with the Superior. She forgot it, however. Next morning, having made the patient rise very early, she went to repair her omission. But, while she went out by one door, Mother Greyffié entered by another. What was her surprise to see Margaret Mary standing, fasting, and about to prepare for communion! Let us hear her recount this little scene, in which shines the humility of Blessed Margaret:—

"Without informing myself of the reasons, I gave her a sharp reprimand, exaggerating to her the defects of her conduct, which, I hinted, was the effect of self-will, and a want of obedience, submission, and simplicity, &c. I told her she might communicate; but that, since her own will had given her courage enough for all that, I would also command her in my turn: That she might arrange her cell, and have her cover placed in the refectory, and go to the office when the bell rang, following all the community exercises for five months, without taking any remedy, without putting a foot in the infirmary, unless to visit the sick and wait on them, if the infirmarians required her services."

"She received this correction kneeling, her hands joined, with a sweet and tranquil air, and having heard my orders before rising, asked pardon and a penance

for her fault, and immediately began to execute to the letter what I had ordered her."

In short, Our Lord gave her perfect health for five months, that is, till the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, on which day the Visitandines renew their vows. On that Festival Our Lord renewed all her past pains, and even aggravated them, to make amends in some manner for the five months of health to which she had submitted through obedience. Emboldened by these wonderful effects of obedience, Mother Greyffié, in order to have still more evidence as to the spirit that governed Margaret Mary, multiplied her trials. Twice more the lover of Jesus Christ was suddenly cured of her pains; and each time, at the term marked, she felt anew all their violence. The worthy Superior proceeded by obediences, written and signed with her own hand, the first of which was couched in the following terms:—

"I command you, in virtue of holy obedience, to ask of God that He may make me see if what has passed, and what still passes within you, is from His Spirit and from His movement, or from that of nature; and, as a sign that all is from Him, that He suspend your physical ailments for the space of five months only, without your having any need of remedies, nor quitting the ordinary routine of the rule. If it be not God, but nature, that acts in your interior and exterior, He may leave you according to your wont, now in one way, now in another. By this we shall learn the truth of this matter."

Immediately after delivering this note, Mother Greyffié made her leave the infirmary. The Sister went to present to Our Lord in prayer the order she had received; and here is His reply: "I could promise thee, My daughter, in the proof of the good spirit that conducts thee, as many years of health as she has asked

months: she shall have what she asks, and at the same time all the assurances she demands."*

The effects followed close upon the promise. The Sister being at Mass, at the moment of the elevation her infirmities were taken away, as if she had been despoiled of a robe; and from this moment her health, tried by labors of the heaviest description, never gave way for a moment during the space of five months. All the community admired this prodigy; but great was the astonishment when, five months later, day for day, hour for hour, she suddenly fell back into her former state. Then she was ordered to pray that the proof might be prolonged for a year; she did so, with the same result as before. According to the remark of a pious historian, Mother Greyffié, after the example of Gideon, feared not to ask prodigy on prodigy, and God blessed her holy boldness, sufficiently justified by the necessity of enlightening the community as to the spirit which governed their Blessed Sister.

"Since you have so well succeeded," said a good lay

* A letter from Margaret to Mother de Saumaise fixes the date of this obedience as December 21, 1679. The letter runs thus: "On the Feast of St. Thomas, our honored Mother commanded me, in virtue of holy obedience, to ask of Our Lord my health, my infirmities having increased to such a degree that I could not long subsist as I was. But He who willed to die by obedience, made known to me how much He cherishes it, since, being then in the infirmary, and rising to go to choir to make the petition my sins rendered me unworthy to obtain, He showed me that the merit of obedience can do all. From that time I have been in such perfect health that it seems as though nothing could injure it, and my cross was changed to an interior one, of which I could not long sustain the weight if the same hand that afflicted me had not strengthened me; for it seemed to me that His sanctity of justice made me feel a little spark of hell, or rather of purgatory." This letter is dated April 30, 1680.

Sister to her frankly, "you ought to command my Sister Margaret not to enter the infirmary for two years." "What has already passed is sufficient to convince me that the Spirit which rules our Sister is of God," was the reply of the wise Mother. The same Sister having asked one day whether all that was said of Margaret Mary was true, the Superior responded quietly:—

"These things are not articles of faith, yet I will tell you, that, to ease my own mind on this subject, I spoke of it to Father de la Colombière, who, you know, is a holy man. He said that, according to all appearances, all that passes in the said Sister Alacoque was from God, because she acts with humility, obedience, great mortification, and submission,"—now, the devil never inspires such holy desires; this would be to destroy himself.*

What reserve in this judgment! What circumspection! All the severity one day to be exercised by the Congregation of Rites in the discussion of Margaret's miracles, is already found by anticipation in the conduct of her Superior. Oh! how the world errs in imagining that the cloister is necessarily the home of credulity; that every thing a little beyond the ordinary, is there admitted without question as a miracle: in our case, the contrary is true; and if I have some apprehension in relating these facts in their primitive simplicity, it is, lest the Religious of Paray should be taxed with incredulity, for we have not yet arrived at the end of the multiplied proofs to which they submitted their Sister, before recognizing her sanctity and accepting her mission.

We do not complain; here is found the application of what St. Gregory the Great said of the Apostle St. Thomas: *His incredulity has served us more than the*

* Deposition of Sister Lazare Dusson, 1715.

faith of Peter. St. Thomas constrained, if we dare say so, the Saviour of men to give the most palpable proofs of His resurrection, to the profit of those who admit only the testimony of the senses. A similar advantage has resulted from the obstinacy of the Religious of Paray. They have forced our faith. Thanks to them, the sanctity of their blessed Sister shines to-day, in the eyes of the whole world, with a more lively splendor; the triumph of the Heart of Jesus, traversed in so many manners, is more manifest and more touching. When we see, on each new occasion, this amiable Heart condescend to all, suit itself to every exigency, to accredit the mission of her who was to be its interpreter, multiply the miracles, the supernatural signs, demanded one after another, as we might say, with real indiscretion, can we fail to see how dear our friendship is to Him, since He has purchased it at such a price; or can we refuse still to partake of the sweet and intimate intercourse to which He first invites us, with unequaled patience and benignity?

CHAPTER XVI.

The Popish Plot.—The Queen, the Duke and Duchess of York implicated.—Titus Oates.—Burnet.—Shaftesbury.—Execution of Catholic Nobles.—Weakness of King Charles.—Banishment of Father Colombière.—Arnauld of Port-Royal becomes his Defender.—He returns to Paray.—Letter to Mother de Saumaise.—Father Joseph de Gallifet.—Father Roothan's Circular, 1840.—Death of Father de la Colombière.—Universal Regret.—His Remains taken to Paray.—Margaret Mary's Devotion to his Memory and Confidence in his Intercession.

1679–1682.

The strength of Father de la Colombière was promptly exhausted in his laborious mission in England; his weak chest more than once betrayed the efforts of his zeal, and it appeared doubtful that he could continue his sermons at St. James's Chapel. Toward the end of the summer of 1678, when he was hourly expecting an order to return to France, several letters from Margaret made him comprehend that he had still new trials to endure in London. Indeed, his Superiors left him there long enough to experience the effects of a furious tempest, of which some of his brethren became the victims; and had it not been for the protection of the name of Louis XIV., and his quality of a French subject, which caused exile to be substituted for imprisonment, who knows whether he would have escaped with his life?

There existed in England, as has been already said, a fanatical party which regarded all means as good that

could put Catholics beyond the protection of the law, and exclude the Duke of York from succession to the throne. To these men calumny cost nothing, even the most unlikely and the most absurd, for they could count on the spirit of the populace, with whom they always found credit enough. Here is, then, the fabulous story they concocted, and which, it must be said, succeeded in their hands beyond their most sanguine expectations.

Innocent XI., the holy Pope that then occupied the pontifical throne, had, they said, resolved to supplant the successors of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, and had even issued a brief in which he took by anticipation the title of King of Great Britain. Father Paul Oliva, General of the Jesuits, invested by the Pope with the government of the three kingdoms, had already prepared instruments by which he nominated the principal Catholic lords to the different offices of the State: Lord Arundel was to be Chancellor; Lord Powis, Treasurer; Lord Bellassis, General-in-Chief; Lords Petre, Richard and Peter Talbot—Godolphin and Viscount Stafford, also obtained important posts; and Father Whitbread, Provincial of the Jesuits in England, was promoted to the Primatial See of Canterbury. All this, remember well, could not be accomplished without attacking the life of the king; hence, the conspirators were undeterred by a regicide which England would have had to deplore, if Providence had not thrice rendered harmless a pistol aimed at the person of his Majesty, and thus preserved his people from so irreparable a calamity. This frightful *popish plot*, as it was called, had been hatched by the Jesuits in a secret assembly held in the palace of St. James. The Duke and Duchess of York, and the Queen herself, were not shielded from all suspicion of complicity. One of the principal persons implicated being Coleman, Secretary to

the Duchess, her preacher, La Colombière, could not be long forgotten.

Such is, in a few words, the plot denounced to the king and the House of Lords by Titus Oates; a name for a moment popular throughout Great Britain, but since devoted to the revengeful justice of history, and definitively classed among the most infamous. From Hume to Lord Macaulay, there is not an historian of England, Catholic or Protestant, who hesitated to brand this name,—to proclaim that it was a libel on the nation to permit itself to be led away by such gross, cowardly imposture.* The ambitious Shaftsbury, who will draw great profit from this odious machination against the Duke of York, had great reason to say to Dr. Burnet, when the latter objected that all the witnesses brought up were ruffians: "Do you not see that the more extravagant our plot will be, the more credulous will be the people." The cynicism of Shaftsbury was only too well

* The appreciations of Lord Macaulay are remarkable: "Titus Oates," says he, "had composed an extravagant romance, more like the ravings of a sick man than a story deserving of credit among sane people. * * * Such fictions were believed by the populace, nay, even eminent men pretended to credit them! The judges of the kingdom were corrupt, cruel, and timid; the chiefs of the party through the country encouraged the prevailing error; the most respectable among them were so far duped as to admit the veracity of the greater part of the evidence. Men of the stamp of Shaftsbury and Buckingham, no doubt clearly saw that the whole was but a tissue of falsehood, but this falsehood served their interests, and the execution of an innocent man weighed no more upon their seared consciences than the killing of the game they took in the chase." *History of England from the Accession of James II.* This work has been translated into French by Baron Peyronnet. As we have not the first volume of the original at hand, the above passage, which we re-translate from the French, may not be verbatim with the same passage in the English edition (chap. ii.), but the sense is the same. [*Trans.*

justified, and the credulity of the people permitted all. Noble lords, the flower of the English aristocracy, were shut up together in the Tower of London; five Jesuits perished by the hand of the common hangman; three others were cast into prison; and, after two years of hard captivity, the most illustrious veteran of the monarchial cause, William Howard, Viscount Stafford, mounted the scaffold, and bent his venerable head beneath the axe, protesting to the last his fidelity to his king, and pardoning his judges and executioners.

On the vigil of these events, of which there had been as yet no foreshadowings, Father de la Coloèmbire wrote to France:—"What makes me think I shall be here some time longer, is, that new fruits present themselves to be gathered, and that our good Sister Alacoque speaks to me only of new fatigues. I received your letter (evidently he is writing to the Superior), and the paper written by her hand, the day I had spoken to the physician, and at a time when I felt so weak and depressed that I was hardly equal to the labors I foresaw for the coming year; and when I regarded my illness as an effect of Providence who, knowing my inability to sustain the burden, willed to take me from this country, I was resolved on it; but after having read the note which ordered me not to lose courage because of difficulties, and which reminded me that we are all-powerful when we confide in God, I began to change my mind, and to believe that I should remain here still."*

He steadily awaited these new fatigues, these difficulties announced to him on the part of God, and when

*This letter is dated September 18, 1678: the 28th of the same month, Titus Oates appeared for the first time before the privy council, and the ominous signs of persecution followed close upon his denunciations.

the day to prove him came, it found him prepared. Well was it for him, then, that he had wished to be calumniated for love of Jesus Christ, and treated, like Him, as a criminal. Accusers were not wanting to him; he who had already succeeded so well in causing Father St. Germain to be denounced—a worthy rival of Titus Oates named Lusancy, like him a species of apostate monk—had no difficulty in causing the arrest of the preacher of the Duchess of York. At a late hour of night, without any respect for the royal hospitality to which he was confided, guards were placed before his chamber; he was conducted to prison, and two days after he was confronted with his accuser, in presence of twelve or fifteen commissaries of the House of Lords. His attitude, full of calm dignity, struck the spectators with admiration. Obliged to wait for some time in an antechamber, he took out his breviary, and quietly recited the Divine Office, heedless of the eyes of a curious crowd which were fastened on him. It is superfluous to say, that nothing could be drawn from him concerning the imaginary conspiracy. It was not considered necessary to implicate him in the plot, consequently he was interrogated chiefly on the effects of his zeal, conversions wrought, abjurations received, services of every description rendered to the Catholic religion in England and in the colonies; finally, on a word, true indeed, but compromising: he had said that King Charles II. was a Catholic at heart. This prince feared nothing more than such a suspicion, and the better to clear himself of it, he daily sacrificed his best friends. After having retained him some weeks in prison, the lords humbly besought his Majesty to send him back to France.* Charles II. prom-

* Nov. 28, 1678, Barillon, ambassador of Louis XIV. at the Court of England, wrote to France: "A Jesuit preacher to Her Highness

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ised everything. The intrepid professor of the faith had to be resigned not to drink the chalice as deeply as he wished; he departed from England his soul pierced, a martyr in will if not in fact, leaving his brethren in irons, with one foot on the scaffold, the children of his apostolate forsaken and in tears, a great Church desolate, ruined for a long time, but he was still ready at a word a sign from his Superiors, to return to suffer and to die in the *country of crosses*, as he styled England.

The news of his iniquitous arrest, and the bloody executions which followed it, spread over Europe, not without exciting painful astonishment; and the legal evidence being published in Holland by Protestant hands, the whole affair was soon revised, and the sentence called to the tribunal of the public conscience. Apologists were

the Duchess of York, named Father de la Colombière, has been arrested at St. James's. He is accused of having designed to convert a Protestant, and of having said that the king is a Catholic at heart." Dépêche chiffrée. *Archives des affaires étrangères.*

It is needless to add that Barillon did not credit the plot. "All reasonable people," wrote he, October 20, "believe that the conspiracy against the person of the King of Great Britain has no true foundation." *Ibid.*

We find in the Journal of the House of Lords the conclusions arrived at by that noble assembly concerning Father de la Colombière. After having summed up the ridiculous charges of the two witnesses, Olivier du Ficquet and François Verdier, there porter terminates thus: "All which matters being of dangerous consequence and in opposition to the Peace and Government of this Kingdom, it is thereupon ORDERED by the Lords spiritual and temporal in Parliament assembled that the Lords with White Staves do attend His Majesty humbly, to desire Him from this House that His Majesty will be pleased to give Order that the said La Colombière may be banished out of this Kingdom, and all other His Majesty's Territories and Dominions whereso-ever." *Journal of the House of Lords*, vol. xiii. p. 368; November 30, 1678, O. S.

not wanting, and the light was not slow to spread. Strange accidents of religious controversies! Among those who rose up in France, was one whom we would little expect to see charge himself with such an office, who, the implacable enemy of the Jesuits, made himself once, at least, their defender: Arnauld the Doctor. Arnauld of Port Royal, obedient, we are willing to believe, to a generous movement of indignation rather than to the tactics of his party, accepted entirely the beautiful part, and with the Catholics of England defended the outrageously calumniated Jesuits. In a work published in 1682 (the very year Father de la Colombière died), he unmasked "the diabolical plot which would pass in posterity for one of the most horrible examples of human malice." "It would be wrong," says he again, "to regard what is passing in England to-day as a comedy and a pretense. It is a barbarous tragedy, of which the demon is the poet and the principal actor." After having related the futile accusations heaped upon Father de la Colombière he cries out: "I ask any reasonable man, if, among these six articles, there is the shadow of conspiracy against the life of the King, or against the State? But what Isaiah formerly said of the Jewish people is true to the letter of the English people of to-day:—*Omnia quæ loquitor populus iste, conjuratio est.* Every thing there is properly a *conspiracy* (*conjuration.*) A Jesuit, authorized by the king, being almoner to his sister-in-law, counsels an apostate monk to return to his convent; this is a *conspiracy.* He directs some Catholic ladies who wish to live in London as Religious: *conspiracy.* He would wish that a few priests were sent to preach the faith to infidels in some parts of America occupied by the English: *conspiracy.* Certainly nothing can be more ridiculous.

But it is, moreover, a signal outrage done to the first princess of England after the queen, to have arrested in her palace, and afterwards imprisoned the director of her conscience, for trifles or for things worthy of praise, regarding his religion and profession, he being under the protection of the king as much in one as in the other capacity."*

Father de la Colombière was then, according to a beautiful expression of the editor of his works, "one of the most illustrious among the calumniated in the last persecutions of England," when he returned to France, probably in the early days of 1679. From Paris he hastened to write to his Provincial at Lyons (his letter is dated January 16, 1679), to offer him anew his services, saying humbly to him:—"I am grieved to return to the province in a state in which, apparently, I cannot work much this year." The prison, the painful emotions of separation and the last adieus; the sea voyage at so rigorous a season; but, above all, the sorrows of his apostolic heart at the sight of so many evils, had preyed upon his weak frame, and the result was an increased hemorrhage from his lungs. From this time he drooped visibly. He was, nevertheless, called to Lyons, to be placed in some occupation compatible with his present weakness. Paray being on his route, he stopped there about eight days. He had reason to admire the progress of grace in Margaret, the benedictions shed on the servant of God, and around her. At his departure, he had confided to her some souls. From England even, he once sent her a generous widow who had the courage to serve some time, unknown, as a simple country girl, in a

* *Apology for Catholics*, against the falsehoods and calumnies of a book entitled: *La Politique du Clergé de France*, &c. A Liège. Broukart, 1682.

neighboring monastery, and who, later on, entered the convent of Paray. He now occupied himself in the foundation of a hospital for the sick poor of this town—an institution in which his memory is perpetuated, it having even survived all the revolutions which destroyed or transformed so many things. He left there, too, a congregation of men who all dearly loved him, as may be seen by his answers to the letters they addressed him. These consolations filled his heart as he passed through his old mission, and he wrote soon after to Mother de Saumaise: "I was ill when I arrived at Paray; but I got so well, that after two days I worked during the rest of my stay (eight days), from morning till night, without feeling the least fatigued. I cannot tell you how much I have been consoled. God has so preserved all things, that it seems *as if blessings have been augmented since my departure.* There are I know not how many poor people whom I had forgotten, in whom God has sown seeds which I little expected, and which produce in their souls solid virtues and an admirable constancy. You can believe that in eight days I could not hold long conversations with those who desired to speak to me, and yet it has pleased the infinite mercy of God to bless so abundantly the few words I have said to them, that all are satisfied, and, so to speak, renewed in fervor: God be eternally glorified for this. I have seen Sister Alacoque only once; but this visit has been a great consolation to me. I have found her, as ever, most humble and submissive, and a great lover of crosses and contempt. Behold the marks of the spirit that conducts her, and such marks have never proved deceitful." This is precisely what he said to Mother Greyffié, when consulted by her.

This one visit, whence he drew such consolation, was,

as usual, a source of humiliation to the servant of God, who was sure to purchase by some suffering the good operated in her by his means. The parlor being very much crowded when the Father called to see her, Mother Greyffié was of opinion that their conversation, which was to be wholly spiritual, might take place in the confessional, though this was contrary to custom. The length of their interview was such as to cause some murmuring. "Certainly," said some of the discontented spirits, "it is very great presumption of her to appropriate to herself so much of the precious time of the Father." These complaints reached the ears of Mother Greyffié, who could have stopped them with a word, but did not do so. Far otherwise, she severely reprimanded the Sister in full chapter before the whole community; and the humble Margaret, who could so easily have justified herself, courageously bore this mortification, without giving the least sign of impatience. Mother Greyffié, to whom we owe all these details, pleasantly says, that, "with good management, the Sister referred all to the profit of humility, meekness, and patience, and never made the least representation of her innocence."

From Lyons, Father de la Colombière wrote to her on rare occasions, always on subjects of edification, for the glory of God, for the good of souls. Charged with the spiritual direction of the young scholastics of the Society, he recommended them earnestly to her prayers; and I cannot avoid making here a remark on this subject. Among them was Joseph Gallifet, a faithful disciple of so eminent a master. Initiated by Father de la Colombière in the knowledge of the Heart of Jesus, we see him alternately in France and in Rome, consecrating all his efforts to propagate this blessed devotion; to cause its spirit to be understood; to establish its practice on

the basis of sound and solid theology; to defend it against its traducers; in fine, to cause it to be adopted by the Church into her liturgy, to which his labors have not a little contributed. And when we think of the starting-point of this career of zeal, how can we avoid seeing therein the fruit of Blessed Margaret Mary's prayers accorded to the desires of Father de la Colombière?

If he for a moment forgot the magnificent promises of the Heart of Jesus—so encouraging, particularly for apostolic workmen and all who labor for the salvation of souls—she was there to recall them to him, and she sometimes did so, with that ardor of conviction which resulted from her consciousness of her supernatural mission, and from the authority of the celestial communications, of which she was the humble interpreter. She writes to him thus:—

"Would that I could make known to the whole world all that I know of this amiable devotion! Oh! my Father, I conjure you to omit nothing to inspire it everywhere. Jesus Christ has shown me in an undoubted manner that it is by means of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus that He wishes to establish everywhere this devotion, thereby to make to Himself an infinite number of faithful servants, of perfect friends, and grateful children.

"I know no other exercise of devotion in the spiritual life more proper to elevate a soul in a short time to the highest sanctity, and make it taste the true sweetness found in the service of God. Yes, I repeat it with certainty, if it were known how pleasing this devotion is to Jesus Christ, there is no one, however little his love for this amiable Saviour, who would not at once practise it.

"Strive to make Religious embrace it: for they will

draw from it great help, and they need no other means to restore primitive fervor and exact regularity, even in the most relaxed houses, and to lead to great sanctity those who are the most regular.

"My Divine Saviour has made me understand that those who labor for the salvation of souls shall have the art of touching the most hardened hearts, and shall labor with wonderful success, if they themselves be penetrated with a tender devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus.

"As to secular persons, they will find by this means all the succors so necessary to their state; that is, peace in their families, solace in their labors, and the benedictions of heaven on all their enterprises. It is properly in the Adorable Heart of Jesus that they shall find a refuge during life, but principally at the hour of death. Ah! how sweet to die after having had a constant devotion to the Heart of Him who will judge us!

"In a word, it is clear that no one in the world can fail to receive assistance from heaven, if he have for Jesus Christ a perfectly grateful love, such as that inspired for Him by devotion to His Sacred Heart."

These were not vain promises, and whoever is versed to a greater or less extent in the religious history of these latter times, cannot ignore their manifest fulfilment.

The preservation of the faith in such violent or perfidious attacks; the revival—still more wonderful, perhaps—of Christian piety, of which a jealous and angry sect sought secretly, and but too successfully, to dry up all sources; the restoration, so unhoped-for, of religious orders, of ancient monastic families, on the accumulated ruins of the Revolution; in fine, the spontaneous flowering, under such various forms, of the works of charity and zeal, by which the field of the Church shows itself

rejuvenated from day to day, and, as it were, decorated with a perpetual spring-time; to what can all this be attributed, I repeat, if not to the vivifying charity of so many holy souls, who, eagerly pressing around the altar and the holy tabernacle, satiate the ardor of their pious desires at the blessed fountains of the Saviour, sheltering and hiding themselves in His wounds, like the dove in the holes of the rock, and who, doing violence to His Sacred Heart, cease not to offer Him the humble immolation of their whole being, in expiation of the offenses and iniquities of the rest of men.

As to the Society of Jesus, specially designated by the Blessed Margaret Mary, with what benediction is it not consecrated to this apostolate of divine love, its magnificent inheritance?

This has been the joy and the crown of its zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, its consolation and its strength in these latter times, through a long succession of evil days. Let us add, that it has from this devotion gathered the sweetest fruits; that it has been recompensed by a thousand celestial favors, of which the most signal is, without doubt, to have survived a terrible crisis and made vain the sinister precautions of its enemies, who believed, not without apparent reason, that it was effaced forever from the land of the living. Thus, when, towards the middle of this present century, he to whom it was given to return thanks to God for a third secular existence,—a duration not always attained in institutions guaranteed by the power of kings and the suffrages of nations,—this devotion is remembered, and he who governs the Society has not failed in this solemn circumstance to proclaim aloud, that if it still subsists, if it has seen its youth renewed like the eagle's, this is, without doubt, the effect of a special complaisance of the Heart

of Jesus, desirous of thus recompensing the fidelity it vowed to that Heart from the commencement, and from which it has never departed.*

Father Colombière returned for the last time to Paray, it may be said, to terminate there his course, God having willed that he should consummate the sacrifice of his life beneath the shadow of the same altars at which, a few years previous, he had vowed himself to the Heart of His Son Jesus.

Nothing had yet presaged his approaching end. Physicians had ordered him native air, and his brother, authorized by the Superiors, came to convey him to Dauphiny, where he hoped to hasten, by the tenderest cares, the restoration of one whose health was so precious to him. His departure had been fixed for Jan. 29, 1682, on the eve of which Mademoiselle de Bisefraud, a pious penitent of Colombière's, hearing of it from one of the Fathers of the College, asked leave to inform Sister Margaret, which was granted. By the same person, the Sister sent him word not to leave Paray, if he could remain there without going against the orders of his Superiors; and as he asked the reason of this, conjecturing at once that she had received some light from Our Lord concerning him, she wrote him these words: "He has told me that He wills the sacrifice of your life here." Changing his design, the Father prolonged his stay at Paray; a few days after, he fell grievously ill, and died holily at seven in the evening, February 15, 1682.

Before his death, he gave to the Superior the prophetic billet. Comprehending that she was betrayed, Margaret sent Mademoiselle de Bisefraud to the College to demand

* This sentiment V. Rev. Father Roothan expressed in the circular addressed to all the houses of his Order in 1840, on occasion of the third centenary of the foundation of the Society.

it. But the Superior replied that he would rather part with all the archives of the College than return such an authentic testimony of the sanctity of Sister Margaret Mary.

The news of this death caused no trouble to the Servant of God, accustomed as she was to consider in every event only the Glory of God, and the good of souls. Mademoiselle de Bisefraud having come to tell her of it at five next morning, she said to her:—"Pray, and procure prayers everywhere for him." Towards ten she wrote to the same person: "Cease to afflict yourself. Invoke him and fear nothing: he is more powerful than ever to assist you." And, as Mother Greyffié expressed surprise that she did not ask permission to do for him as for other deceased persons, penances, to say prayers, &c., she replied: "My dear Mother, he has no need of them. He is in a state to pray to God for us, being in heaven, through the goodness and mercy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lord. Only, to satisfy for some negligence in the exercise of divine love, his soul was deprived of the vision of God from the moment it left his body till the moment his remains were laid in the tomb."

This premature death excited universal regret. In a few years, Claude de la Colombière had fulfilled a great apostolic career; the people of Charolais honored him as a saint. Paray bewailed him as a benefactor, and the magistrates wished to raise to him, from the public funds, a monument in the parochial church. But the Jesuits refused to part with his body; they buried it in their own church, where his tomb was soon hung with the votive offerings of the faithful, pious testimonies of their confidence in him; and when proscription struck the Society of Jesus and dispersed its members, the last Superior of their residence in Paray confided these pre-

cious remains to the Religious of the Visitation, by whom they were secured from the profanation that threatened them toward the end of the last century. Inclosed to-day, in an humble glazed shrine, they repose in the quiet shade of the cloister, not far from the holy tomb which has just disclosed to the view and homages of the faithful the glorious mortal coil of Margaret Mary Alacoque.

Every year, at the return of the anniversary of this precious death, Sister Margaret celebrated the Feast of Claudius de la Colombière. One day she saw him in glory with St. Francis de Sales, both forming the cortège of Our Lord and His Holy Mother. She composed a litany to him, in which she saluted him with the most magnificent titles: *Mirror of all virtues*, said she, *Victim of divine love*, *Lily planted in virtue's soil*, *Angel in purity*, *Joy of thy parents*, *Honor of thy country*, *Glorious Martyr in will*, *who didst expire in the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, *pray for me!*

She also invoked his assistance by prayers written in liturgical style. Here is one which we love to write after her, not, be it remembered, with a view to anticipate the judgment of the Church, or call forth by our private authority an unseasonable devotion, but in the spirit of faith and simplicity which excited the Blessed Sister to invoke the intercession of the great Servant of Jesus Christ.

LET US PRAY.

O God, Eternal and Omnipotent, who hast given us in these latter ages a model of consummate sanctity in the person of Blessed Claude de la Colombière, Thy faithful servant, of the Society of Jesus; we beseech Thee to grant us, through his prayers and powerful intercessions before the Heart of Jesus, the grace to imitate him in his

virtues of charity, simplicity, humility, that we may thereby come to eternal happiness. Through the same Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth world without end. Amen.

CHAPTER XVII.

Margaret Mary describes the Sanctity of Justice and the Sanctity of Love.—Jubilees.—The Turks driven back from Vienna.—Sobieski attributes the Victory to God.—The Carnival.—Letter of Madame de Maintenon on the Death of Maria Teresa.—Margaret Mary hears the Songs of the Seraphim.—Death of Mother de Monthoux. —Death of Seraphine Boulier.—Miraculous Occurrences.—Death of the dear little Sister Antoinette Rosalie.—The Poet Antoine Senécé. —Mary Christina Melin.—Margaret is appointed Directress of the Novices.—Her Love for them.

"I WISH to be all things to thee," did Our Lord say to the Beloved of His Heart. "I shall be thy joy and thy consolation, but I will also be thy suffering." To accomplish this mysterious promise, He had need only of His infinite perfections; He then permitted to be appeased on her His Sanctity of Justice and His Sanctity of Love, and she avows that without an extraordinary succor from heaven, she had been overwhelmed by the weight of this.

Of these strange rigors, she has left us a lively picture: "Rather than appear in the presence of God with a single stain," said she, "I would precipitate myself into all imaginable pains, and offer to endure those of the damned. In this state the soul resembles a boiling oil, which penetrates to the marrow of the bones, and renders the body so insensible to pain of any other description, that it would seem rather a relief than a suffering. What I find most severe is, the presence of my Sovereign when He thus favors me with it: He gives

impressions of His purity which it is impossible for the soul to support, seeing herself so abominable. She would wish to be able to fly and hide herself; but in vain: this God full of love takes pleasure in seeing her in this torment, and follows her wherever she flies. It is not that she would, on any account whatever, lose the sight of her Beloved by doing any action displeasing to Him; she would have suffered a thousand deaths first; she often says, with St. Peter: *Depart from me, for I am a sinner.* Far from desiring to be delivered from this suffering state, I would wish each moment to augment my pains."

It is thus she describes the effects of the sanctity of justice.

"The sanctity of love," says she, "gives the soul no less suffering, except that all its pains give the soul such great movements of content and joy, that it is not less difficult to explain them. They bestow on the soul such an ardent desire to be united to God, that it has no repose day or night, for the bed and the table seem to it a gibbet to which it goes to be crucified. Conversations are its suffering. God, making the soul incessantly see Him, and the treasures He is eager to bestow, the ardent love He has for her, and the little correspondence she has for such love, presses her to love Him as only the Divine Author of these operations can express. No longer has the soul any interest, desire, or eagerness but for His love: the rest seems to her useless or superfluous."

This last she usually endured for the souls in purgatory, and in participation of their sufferings: their ardent desire of being united to God leaves them no repose day or night. As to the sanctity of justice, she bore the weight of it every week to save some soul, to bring back some stray sheep to the path of Christian perfection, to

expiate some public scandal, or to gain some victory, to obtain the advancement of the reign of her Heavenly Spouse. Thus she was never more a prey to these mysterious sufferings than during the years that preceded the full triumph of the Heart of Jesus at Paray and other Visitation convents. She then saw clearly all that would happen to humble and afflict her till death; Our Lord gave her such strong impressions of this, that all these sufferings present to her imagination, were not less sensible than if they had been real: which caused her, as she assures us, much consolation.

United as she was to the Heart of Jesus, it was not possible that she should not have a privileged part in the evils Christendom then endured, and the perils with which the Church was surrounded; for the Turks daily made great progress; they assembled formidable forces to overthrow the empire; and the divisions of Christian princes, bringing their audacity to its climax, made it be feared that they would withdraw several provinces in which the rule of Austria was but poorly established. Happily, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the great and holy Pope Innocent XI, watched over his flock, and spared nothing to protect it from these ravenous wolves. It is known that by his care was concluded a league, offensive and defensive, between the Emperor and Poland (1683), and that he thus raised up for the defense of Vienna John Sobieski, the Christian hero of this epoch. Once more, far in the seventeenth century, the children of the old emperor owed their salvation to the papacy, whose generous efforts drove back to Asia the threatening tide of infidelity and barbarism. But the popes acted not like the other princes of the earth, who put their hopes in arms, and combinations of human policy, more or less ingenious. There is a heavenly force which they bring

into requisition on these great occasions: prayer. To this they confide themselves when abandoned by the prudent of this world, and two jubilees proclaimed by Innocent XI. in 1681 and 1683, were certainly not without their influence in promoting the prodigious success of the Catholic armies before the walls of Vienna. Humbling his face to the earth at a time when the *Te Deum* should be chanted, Sobieski acknowledged this, with a simplicity of faith which in no way detracts from his great warlike qualities. God, the God of armies, had combated at his side. But what had attracted the succors of God? Prayer, *the prayer of the just, which penetrates the clouds;* the sacrifice of many innocent victims, mostly buried in the obscurity of the cloister, having no witness of their heroism but God and the angels. Of this number was the humble virgin of Paray, who, responding with her habitual generosity to the appeal of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, put in the balance of the destinies of nations the weight of her sufferings. While she offered to the Lord her blood and her tears, she received from Him abundant lights on the dispositions of souls in these days of penance. Several, alas! amid the sincere alarms awakened by the evils of the Church, thought very little of reforming their lives. Moved by the progress of infidelity, which from without threatened the subjugation of Europe, they did nothing to vanquish the infidelity of their own hearts, much more afflicting to the holy Church, and above all, much more sensible to the Heart of Jesus. Thus, the Divine Master failed not to complain to His dear Spouse, who relates in these terms what was revealed to her on that occasion:*

* We think there is here question of the first of two jubilees, the second being published in France when all danger was over for

"When overtures for the jubilee were made, my Jesus showed me, in the severity of a judge, that it was not so much because of infidels that His justice was irritated, as because of His chosen people, who had revolted against Him, and who used the intimacy with which He had approached them only to persecute Him; and that while they had been faithful to Him, He had always tied up the hands of His justice, and given free reins to His mercy. 'But if they do not amend,' He added, 'I will make them feel the weight of My just indignation.' He declared to her, nevertheless, that one just soul could obtain pardon for a thousand criminals.

"During matins," pursues she, "He continually said: 'Weep and sigh incessantly for My Blood uselessly shed

Christendom. Now, this first jubilee was opened in the Diocese of Autun, May 10, 1682, and closed May 24, as may be seen by the following extract for the capitulary Register: "Au dixiesme apvril, 1682, Messieurs les vénérables de l'église cathédrale d'Autun, capitulairement assemblés au son de la cloche, lieu et manière accoutumée, pour traiter les affaires, *scavoir:* Mr. de Rostaing, doyen, Feroux, Pigenal Jaudan, Brochot, Robert Jacquin, Flamant, Mellery, Corniaught, Martignat de la Thorisou, Granier de Theiste, Danchmant, &c. Messieurs ont ordonné qu'ayant heu advis sur la communication que Mons. le grand vicaire a heu avec le sieur Scindic, qui en a faict son rapport à la compagnie, qu'à l'ouverture du jubilé se fera une procession générale le dimanche dans l'Octave de l'Ascension, laquelle procession commencera après la prime, et au retour de la dite procession sera exposé le Sainct-Sacrement avec les cérémonies en tel cas accoutumés, et que la cloture du Jubilé se fera pareillement le dimanche de la Trinité, après vespres, par une procession aussy générale, en suite de quoy la bénédiction du Sainct-Sacrement sera donnée, et que le Sainct-Sacrement sera exposé pendant les jours de feste qui se trouveront dans la quinzaine. *Signé:* De Rostaing, *doyen.*"

From the old *capitular Registers* deposited with the mayor of Autun, and confided to the archivist of the *Society eduenne.* (Volume commencing on March 8, 1681, and terminating by a deliberation of December 17, 1688.)

on so many souls who greatly abuse it in these indulgences; who are content to clip the bad herbs growing up in their hearts, but will not tear them out by the root. But woe to these souls that remain sullied and thirsty in the midst of living waters, since they shall never be cleansed or refreshed!' And addressing myself to His Sacred Heart, I then said:—'My Lord and my God, Thy mercy must lodge there all these unfaithful souls, that they may be justified, to glorify Thee eternally.' And He said to me interiorly: 'Yes, I will do it, if thou wilt promise their perfect amendment.'—'But Thou knowest well, my God, that this is not in my power, unless Thou Thyself make it so by rendering efficacious the merits of Thy holy Passion.'"

He made known to her that, during this time of jubilee, she should offer to His Sovereign Majesty, first, His infinite satisfactions on the tree of the cross, to restore life to criminal souls, become the prey of sin; secondly, the ardors of His Divine Heart, to inflame souls tepid in His service; thirdly, the submission of His will to that of His Father, to obtain the consummation of all graces, and the full accomplishment of the Divine will on earth.

The carnival, by multiplying the iniquities of men, always brought her new sufferings. A prey to indescribable depression, she found neither consolation nor relief. Lent came, she recovered all her strength, and observed from one end to the other all the fasts of the Church. Once, five weeks before Ash Wednesday, Our Lord appeared to her under the form of the *Ecce Homo*, bearing His cross, covered with wounds and bruises, whence gushed forth His Adorable Blood. "Is there no one to compassionate My sorrow?" said He; "no one to share it, in this pitiable state to which sinners reduce Me, especially at this time?" Prostrate at His Sacred Feet, she tearfully

offered herself to Him, and He charged her with His heavy cross studded with nails and thorns. She was overwhelmed with its weight, and comprehended better than ever the malice and grievousness of sin. In the horror she conceived of it, she would a thousand times rather have precipitated herself into hell than commit a voluntary sin. "O accursed sin!" said she, "how detestable thou art, because of the injury thou dost to my Sovereign Good!" Jesus Christ made her see that not only must she carry this cross, but also be fastened to it, to bear Him faithful company. She abandoned herself without reserve to His good pleasure, and He Himself fastened her to the cross by a painful illness, in which she felt the sharp points of the nails and thorns; and which, instead of compassion, drew upon her only contempt, rebuffs, and a thousand other things painful to nature. Often she suffered for some particular soul, and endured all the pains merited by a long series of infidelities. When this was for a hardened soul, guilty of great abuse of all graces, whom God menaced with total abandonment, the holy Sister was plunged in the despair of a reprobate soul at the hour of death—a state so terrible that she had no words to describe it. As she was alone one day, occupied in some work, there was placed before her eyes a Religious still living, and she clearly heard these words: "Stay, this person has only the name of a Religious, and I am about to cast her from My Heart, and abandon her." Seized with extreme horror, Margaret prostrated herself on the ground, and was for a long time unable to move. Touched with boundless compassion for this soul, she offered herself for her to the Divine Justice, whose anger was immediately turned against herself, so that she fell into unspeakable anguish, and found herself surrounded on all sides by desolate objects.

She felt oppressed with an enormous weight, and saw God armed to strike her, hell open beneath her feet ready to ingulf her, while within her all was revolt and confusion. Her enemy besieged her on all sides, tempting her especially to despair. She could not avoid his pursuits, nor hide from his eyes, and she endured frightful confusion, thinking that her state was known to all the world. Incapable even of prayer, she found consolation only in tears. "Ah!" she cried, "how terrible it is to fall into the hands of the living God;" or, with her face to the ground: "Strike, my God! cut, burn, consume all that displeases Thee; spare neither my body, my life, my flesh, nor my blood, provided Thou savest eternally that soul!" She soon fell ill, and was healed with great difficulty; and she avowed that she could not have endured so long, so painful a state, if the divine mercy had not sustained her against the rigors of His Justice.

God having shown her another time the chastisements reserved for some souls, she cast herself at the feet of Our Lord, saying: "O my Saviour, rather discharge on me all Thy fury; efface me from the Book of Life rather than lose these souls which have cost Thee so dear."—"But they do not love thee, and will not cease to afflict thee."—"No matter, my God, provided they love Thee; I will not cease to beseech Thee to pardon them."—"Let Me alone, I can bear them no longer."—"No, my Lord," said she, clasping tightly His Sacred Feet, "I will not leave Thee till Thou hast pardoned them."—"I will do so, if thou answer for them."—"Yes, my God, but I shall always pay Thee only the treasures of Thy Sacred Heart, which are Thy own goods." Whereupon, Our Lord declared Himself satisfied and forgave them.

Her Superior having one day said to her: "Go, take

the place of the King before the Blessed Sacrament," she went; but the whole time she remained there, she was assailed with thoughts and imaginations which inspired her with the greatest horror, and which ordinarily never molested this angelic soul. This lasted several hours, till finally, the Superior having told her to take the place of a good Visitation nun, she was delivered from this strange torment, so new to her.*

It is already known that the devil spared her not, and continually assaulted her; but Our Lord had limited his power to the temptations He Himself had endured for love of us, during the days of His mortal life, especially in the desert. How many times was she not pursued by "the abominable temptation to gluttony!" The hunger which tormented her lasted till the moment she entered the refectory, where it immediately ceased, giving place to an insurmountable disgust, but returned more violently than ever as she rose from table. The Superior having desired her to inform her whenever she felt its sting, to accomplish this order she had to vanquish an extreme repugnance; after which she was told to keep her hunger, and satisfy it only with the community. She was often tempted to vainglory, and still oftener to despair: so that, seeing herself so wicked, and imagining she had no love for God, she thought she should be eternally deprived of the possession of Him, which made her shed torrents of tears. One day, Satan appeared to her in the shape

* A very little while after the death of the Queen Maria Teresa of Austria (July 30, 1683), Madame de Maintenon wrote to Madame de Brinon: "I beseech you not to be remiss in praying for the King; he has more need of grace than ever, to sustain a state contrary to his inclination and his habits." In sending Sister Margaret to take the place of this prince before the Blessed Sacrament, did not the Superior of Paray obey a similar inspiration, motived perhaps by the same circumstances?

of a hideous Moor, his eyes sparkling like burning coals, who said, gnashing his teeth: "Cursed be thou; I will attack thee, and if I once get thee in my power, I shall make thee feel what I can do; I shall pursue thee everywhere." He often reiterated these menaces, but she fearlessly drove him off by means of a little crucifix to which Our Lord had attached this grace, and which she carried night and day on her heart.

In the strongest of these trials and combats, her soul was consoled by the presence of her Beloved, and by the visits of angels, who came to surprise her every hour, often even in the midst of most vulgar cares, and while she was employed with her Sisters in manual works. O the sweet vision that she had one day, when all the community was occupied in dressing hemp, that is, preparing it for the spinners, by cleansing it bit by bit of its roughness. In order to be more recollected, she worked at a little distance from the rest, in a small court near the chapel, saying no doubt, with the Spouse in the Canticles: *My beloved standeth behind our wall, looking through our lattices;* and her heart was inflamed with this thought when she heard the concerts of the Seraphim. But let us leave herself to initiate us into the sweet, ineffable secrets of these blessed hours:—

"Once, as we were carding the hemp, I retired to a little court near the Holy Sacrament. There, while working on my knees, I suddenly felt recollected interiorly and exteriorly, and at the same time I saw the Amiable Heart of my Adorable Jesus, which appeared more brilliant than the sun. It was in the midst of flames of pure love, surrounded by Seraphim, who sang with admirable harmony:—

Love triumphs, love rejoices,
The love of the Holy Heart rejoices!

These blessed spirits invited me to unite with them in praising this Divine Heart, but I durst not do it. They again pressed me, and said: 'that they had come to associate themselves with me, to render to this Sacred Heart a continual homage of love, adoration and praise; that consequently they held my place before the Blessed Sacrament, to the end that I might love it, without ceasing, by their instrumentality; and that they in their turn would participate in my love, suffering in my person as I rejoiced in theirs.' They at the same time wrote this association in the Sacred Heart in letters of gold, and in the ineffaceable characters of love. All this lasted about two or three hours. During my whole life I felt the effects of this favor, as much by the succor I drew from it as by the sweetness it had produced, and continued to produce in me. I remained wholly plunged in confusion. In praying to the angels, I henceforth called them my divine associates. This grace imprinted on me such a desire of purity of intention, and so high an idea of the purity necessary to converse with God, that all things appeared impure to me, when I referred them to that end."

Admirable commerce of heaven with earth, sweet and consoling community of goods, in which our part is still beautiful, since it includes the Cross, a treasure of which saints know all the value, and which the blessed angels themselves may envy us!

At other times, Margaret Mary, that nothing might be wanting to her universal charity, united herself to the suffering Church, offering her merits for the relief and deliverance of her *good friends*, the souls in purgatory, and she then endured the rigors of the sanctity of love.

In the beginning of the year 1683, the house of Annecy suffered a great loss in the person of the Superior, Mother Philiberte Emanuele de Monthoux, taken from her com-

munity at the moment when she exercised toward her daughters, visited by sickness, the most heroic charity. "It was in serving them," say the Annals, "that she sacrificed her own life, in imitation of Him who willed that the salvation of men should cause His own death." They had interred, in a short time, five Religious, and they were enjoying some respite, when, suddenly, the infirmaries were filled with sick. Mother de Monthoux, worn and fatigued to excess, took the fever, but she said nothing about it, and continued to drag herself with an intrepid heart among the sick, the agonizing, and the dead. "Though the fever increased, God gave her strength enough to say the office on the eve and Feast of St. Francis. It seemed that, like a melodious swan, she would announce by her song the news of her death; for she never chanted with more gravity and devotion than in the last office at which she assisted in this world."* After a short illness, during which she gave the greatest edification to the community, she expired without any struggle, on the fifth day of the fever. In washing her body, they discovered the Name of Jesus engraved on her heart and on her arm, and they all kissed it respectfully. When the news of this reached Paray, Mother Greyffié, who, as we know, was professed at Annecy, not content to honor by barren regrets so dear a memory, desired Margaret Mary to pray specially for the deceased. After some time, Our Lord deigned to reveal to His Servant that this soul was precious in His sight, because of her great love and inviolable fidelity, in His service for which she would be recompensed when her purification in purgatory was completed; and He made Margaret see in this place of expiation the soul of Mother de Monthoux, greatly

* See the *Lives of several Mothers of the Visitation of St. Mary.* Annecy: 1693.

solaced by the good works and suffrages daily offered for it. One Holy Thursday night, praying before the Blessed Sacrament according to her custom for this poor suffering soul, she saw it beneath the chalice from which Our Lord poured over her the merits of His dolorous Agony, in the Garden of Olives. On Easter Sunday, April 18, she saw her in a state of felicity, loving and desiring the posses sion of God; and, finally, on the Sunday of the Good Shepherd, losing herself sweetly in divine glory, after which she heard her repeat the canticle of the Seraphim :—

"Love triumphs, love rejoices,
Love rejoices in God!"*

What a lesson for our tepidity in this long exclusion from heaven, imposed by the Divine Justice on so perfect a soul, that had so generously sacrificed her life!

The same year, September 7th, died Mother Seraphine Boulier, the illustrious Superior of Dijon, with whom Margaret Mary was united by their common friendship for Mother de Saumaise. A little after her happy departure, the Servant of God wrote of her: "It seems to me that she is no longer in necessity, and I believe her to be high in glory, and in the rank of Seraphim destined to render perpetual homage to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, to make reparation for the bitterness He suffered, and still suffers, in the Blessed Sacrament, through our ingratitude and coldness. She is well able to aid us."

But what did not Margaret suffer for tepid and imperfect Religious? One of this class, long deceased, came one night and awoke her suddenly: "As we should not believe in dreams," said she, "I did not mind it much but she made me attend in spite of myself." She was

* "L'amour triomphe, l'amour jouit,
L'amour en Dieu se réjouit!"

pressed and pursued till she completely lost her rest: the poor maiden was expiating in atrocious sufferings her negligences, her murmurs against Superiors, her uncharitable conversations. "Ah! how I would wish," said she, "that all souls consecrated to God could see me in this horrible state! They would walk with new ardor in exact observance." She was relieved only by a communion of the Servant of God, and by a Mass celebrated in honor of the Passion for her soul. On New Year's Day, as she prayed for three deceased persons, two of whom had been Religious, and the third a secular, the Saviour said to her: "Which will I give thee?" And as she referred the choice to Himself, He delivered the soul of the secular person, judging it more worthy of compassion than were those of the Religious, who had had, in the practice of the rules, more means of expiating their daily faults and weaknesses.

She saw others who, for having been disunited from their Superiors, were deprived of the succors of the Holy Virgin and the saints, and the visits of their guardian angels. Some had no other sign of their predestination than that they did not hate God. Others, in punishment of violations of charity, had no share in the suffrages of the community, and were succored only by the prayers of the Sisters for whom they had least friendship. One, in fine, was condemned not to ask any relief, because, contrary to her supernatural attraction for pure suffering, she had sought consolation with too much eagerness.

On Corpus Christi, as she was at adoration, a Benedictine Religious, former Prior of Paray, appeared to her all in flames, which penetrated even herself, and seemed as though they would consume her. Moved by the deplorable state in which she saw him, she wept abundantly. He reminded her that he had once heard her

confession, and permitted her to go to Holy Communion. "It was," said he, "in favor of this communion that God permitted him to address himself to her, to beg that she would apply to him all her satisfactory works, for three months;" which she did. He afterward told her the causes of his sufferings. The first was, having preferred his own interest to the glory of God, through too much attachment to his reputation; the second, having failed in charity toward his brethren; the third, too much natural affection he had for creatures, and the testimonies he had given them of this in spiritual entertainments; which was very displeasing to God. For three months this soul left her not, and the continual sight of such suffering caused her inexplicable torments. Her Superior, through compassion, permitted her penance upon penance: this was the only remedy for her interior pains, the only means of appeasing the rigors of the Divine justice with which she was pursued. At length she fell sick, and she was cured only when this soul, being about to enter heaven, appeared to her all joyous, and gave her the assurance that he would not forget her before God.

These communications with the poor souls in purgatory sometimes led to consequences which, with or without her consent, betrayed their mysterious origin. Thus she was charged to warn M. Billet, physician to the monastery, of a thing concerning justice and the salvation of his soul. This advice came from his wife, recently dead. Mother Greyffié, to whom the Servant of God declared it, at first made no account of it, but the terrible noises she heard that night made her change her resolution. The physician, having learned it, acknowledged that the warning came from God, and he profited by it immediately.

A novice, having heard of the death of her father, was

eager to recommend him to the prayers of the Blessed Margaret, from whom she received this answer: "My child, be quiet; he has no need of our prayers, but is in a state to assist us with his. Ask your mother what generous action her husband did before his death." This gentleman died far from Paray, but his wife, who came there shortly afterward, to assist at her daughter's profession, informed the Sisters that the deceased, who had been a good man, had given in his last moments a great example of generosity and Christian humility. When the Holy Viaticum was brought him, he perceived among those who accompanied Our Lord, a common man, a butcher by trade, who hid himself in a far corner of the room: remembering that he had offended him by harsh words, the dying man called him by name, and cordially extending his hand, besought him to pardon the pain he had caused him, and this with a humility rare among people of rank, and which greatly edified all the assistants.

As has been already seen, the extraordinary lights of Sister Margaret, her heavenly prudence, her foresight, so often justified in the matter of vocations, all the gifts she had received for the guidance of souls, were manifested in many conjunctures. Her Sisters recurred to her in all their temptations, and proclaimed that she was endowed in an eminent degree with the penetration of the secrets of hearts. This had even transpired to some extent outside. Often might be seen in the parlor such and such a penitent of Father de la Colombière, to whom he had said: "You shall find at St. Mary's a person whose counsels you ought to follow. I consult her in what regards myself, and act by her advice." Each found in the billets she wrote, as it were, at the dictation of Our Lord, the directions most appropriate to her necessities. Letters were addressed her from many places, especially

from Dijon and Moulins, where Mother de Saumaise had inspired all with her own admiration for the virtues of this Sister, and her confidence in her counsels and prayers. All this was not quite in keeping with the profound obscurity so dear to her; she felt serious apprehensions on account of it, her whole inclination being to be forgotten by all, and to hold the lowest rank. In this she had probably succeeded to her own satisfaction, if Our Lord had not had other views for her: was it not fit that this pure light, so long hidden under a bushel, should be placed a few moments on a candlestick, to enlighten all assembled in this holy house? We are about to see by what sweet and efficacious ways the good Master accomplished His designs, a little before Mother Greyffié removed from Paray.

One of the *little sisters* of the boarding-school, Antoinette Rosalie de Sénecé, fell dangerously ill, and soon her life was despaired of. She was hardly thirteen, yet she had been for six years consecrated to Our Lord by the vow of virginity. Besides the sorrow the community experienced in anticipation of so great a loss, the climax of its trouble was, that the poor child, plunged in a lethargic sleep, was unable to confess or receive the Holy Viaticum. They could not but feel alarmed as to the lot of this soul, which we may suppose to be so pure, obliged to enter on eternity before cleansing away the stains, which, alas! we cease not to contract while we tread the paths of our exile. Touched with compassion for the soul of the child, Mother Greyffié desired Margaret Mary to pray for her, and to abandon herself to the good pleasure of Our Lord, that poor Antoinette might receive the last sacraments. "I had no sooner fulfilled this direction," says she in her Memoirs, "than the Sovereign Master of my soul promised me that the *little Sis-*

ter would not die without the sacraments, provided I promised Him three things, which He absolutely willed of me: first, never to refuse any employment in religion; secondly, not to refuse to go to the parlor; thirdly, not to refuse to write. At this demand I trembled, so great was my repugnance. I answered: 'O, my Lord, how well dost Thou take advantage of my weakness! but I shall ask permission.' My Superior gave it to me at once, and she made me promise, in form of a vow, that I would never resist such employments. But alas! how many infidelities have I not committed! for this vow did not take from me the pain I felt therein, which lasted all my life."

But the grace purchased by this sacrifice was full and entire. Antoinette opened her eyes, recovered the use of her senses, and received the sacraments of the dying; and after the Church, this good mother, had decked her with the most precious ornaments, and, so to say, the last robes for so beautiful a feast, the happy child slept in the Lord, going to join the choir of virgins, and to celebrate in their company the nuptials of the Lamb.*

* We read in the mortuary register of the Visitation of Paray this touching note, which makes one envy so happy a destiny:—

"On April 26, 1684, died in the monastery of Paray, the dear little Sister, Antoinette Rosalie de Sénecé, aged thirteen years. She was only seven when she made the vow of chastity, and in her last illness (probably after the grace obtained for her by Blessed Margaret), she asked to make those of religion, which was granted her conditionally. She was buried with the Religious habit."

Let us note, in passing, that the lands of Senescey-les-Mâcon, after having long belonged to the house of Beauffremont, had passed by sale to the family of Bauderon of Paray, several members of which are distinguished in medical science, and civil and military employ. *Antoine* de Sénecé, the amiable poet, married Henrietta de Blanzi (1667), and had six daughters, one of whom died young. We should

About a month after this, Mother Greyffié's second triennial had expired, and Mother Mary Christina Melin of Paray was elected. She was a Religious of such great sweetness that she was called the true daughter of St. Francis de Sales, of whom she had all the inclinations, and even the style, according to the testimony of Mother M. Elizabeth Monthoux, Superior of Annecy. Her government, bearing in all respects imprint of her excessive sweetness, made Sister Margaret regret Mother Greyffié's, to whom she wrote to Semur in Auxois, her new residence: "My honored and dear Mother, with so many defects and miseries, what can my soul do, always hungering for humiliations? And when I think that you sometimes did me the favor to nourish me with this bread, so delicious, though so bitter to nature, and that now I am deprived of this happiness, no doubt because of the bad use I made of it, I am overwhelmed with grief." God provided: notwithstanding the extreme meekness of Mother Melin, Margaret was satiated with this bread, and even found in it bitterness it had not yet been given her to taste so leisurely.

After the election of the new Superior, Margaret was nominated assistant—that is to say, according to the language of the Constitutions, that she became "the lieutenant of the Superior," occupying in choir the place next to hers, directing the offices, and charged also with presiding at the lectures and at the choice of books. From this modest post, first testimony of the confidence of her Sisters, she was, some months later, transferred to another employment, which gave new scope to her zeal: she was nominated Directress of the Novices. Here she

not wonder if he were the father of the little Sister *Antoinette* Rosalie. See Notice on the family of Bauderon de Sénecé, prefixed to the *Selected Works* of Sénecé. Paris: P. Janet, 1855.

was, in the designs of God, to exercise an apostolate, and labor to conquer to the Heart of the Divine Master the hearts of the young maidens, whose simplicity was doubtless most pleasing to Him: amiable gift, by which we resemble the little children that are heirs to the kingdom of heaven, and offered by the Gospel as models for all the elect. Our Lord prepared her in a special manner for this ministry during her retreat in autumn, in which she was inundated in a still higher degree with celestial lights, and sweet and familiar caresses. On the first day, He presented to her His Sacred Heart as a furnace, the flames of which penetrated her as though they would reduce her to ashes. "Behold," said He, "the divine purgatory of My love, where thou must be purified during this life; then I shall bring thee to a sojourn of light, and afterwards of union and transformation." This she experienced during her solitude, not knowing, to speak truly, whether she was in heaven or on earth, so plunged was she in God. The night before her confession, all her sins were shown her as in writing, and she felt such a lively sorrow that it seemed as though her heart would break. It was a great torment to be then deprived of Holy Communion. She had admirable lights on the state of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, where He exemplifies to us the three virtues which are the objects of the three vows of religion—chastity, poverty, and obedience; of this last, above all, which renders Him present under the species the moment the sacramental words are pronounced, whether by a good or bad priest, whatever use is to be made of Him, without even refusing to be conveyed to the hearts of sinners, for whose crimes He has such abhorrence. Having made resolutions conformable to these views, she trembled lest she should not be able to put them in practice. But

as she approached the holy table, this amiable Saviour made her understand that He came to imprint on her heart His Eucharistic life—a life hidden and annihilated in the eyes of men, a life of death and sacrifice—and that He would give her strength to do what He desired of her.

Then, too, she received one of the most signal favors that had yet been granted her, Our Lord having declared to her Himself that she should know the extent of it only at the hour of death. Meanwhile, He gave her a faint idea of it, by a sensible image presented to her in prayer, and which she thus describes: "A light came forth from the wound in His Adorable Side, and darted into my heart (making me feel very great heat), with these words: 'It is thus that My love continually flows in the heart I have given thee, which, by another flowing, will send back the goods to their source.'" It was told her that this grace should be continual; she had the first effusion of it one Friday during Holy Communion.

Here is another favor, also very special, though of an order perhaps less elevated, which we will be allowed to relate here, as it is impossible for us to assign it any date:—

"My daughter," said Our Lord to her, "I take so much pleasure in seeing thy heart that I wish to put Myself in its place, and to be thy heart." "And this He did so sensibly," says she, "that I could not doubt of it. From that time His Goodness gave me such free access to His Greatness that I cannot explain it."

"Hast thou lost now by the change?" asked the Beloved of her soul.

Admirable familiarity of God with His creature, familiarity incomprehensible, and, as the author of the Imitation says: *Familiaritas stupenda nimis!*

Here is another example of this divine familiarity, and a new preparation for the care she was to take of the novices, cherished flock of the Infant Jesus: her liberatrix, as she styled the Blessed Virgin, honored her with a visit, holding in her arms her Divine Son, whom she gave to her, saying: "Behold Him who comes to teach thee what thou must do." She experienced great joy, and an ardent desire to caress Him, which this amiable Saviour graciously permitted her to do.

When she testified her tenderness for him, He said to her: "Art thou now content? let this serve thee always, for I wish that thou be abandoned to My power, as thou hast seen what I have done. Whether I caress or torment thee, thou oughtest have no other movements but those I give thee."

Henceforth she found herself, happily, unable to resist Him.

It was among these divine caresses that holy obedience came to reclaim her, to confide to her the education of the novices, that blessed portion of the inheritance of the Lord, the sweet and tender hope of the monastery.

More than once, no doubt, forgetful of self, she wearied herself in endeavoring to sustain them, and in giving them sound and fortifying nourishment. But she drew from the Heart of the Son and the Mother tenderness enough for her charge to make it a light burden, which could not depress her. Her solicitude will prepare for religion a new generation of valiant daughters, chaste lovers and faithful spouses of Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Qualifications required in the Directress.—Margaret Billet, Margaret and Rosalie Verchère.—Rosalie de Farges.—Mary Bocaud.—Christina Bouthier.—Nicolle de Claine.—Margaret's Letter to a Postulant.—Her Discretion.—Her Instructions to the Novices.—Feast of St. Margaret in the Novitiate.—First Honors paid to the Divine Heart.—The Ancients attach themselves rather to the Letter than the Spirit of the Rule.

It was a rare fortune for the monastery of Paray to be able to put into such good hands the formation of the novices, a most important office, on which depends in a great measure the preservation and strength of all religious institutes. Who could better than she sow in these young hearts the seeds of the virtues most dear to the Visitation, and which compose in some manner its crown of honor,—humility, meekness, simplicity, patient and generous charity? No doubt such a selection had the full approbation of St. Francis de Sales, to whose views it so well responded: "The Directress, then, ought to have a mind humbly generous, noble, and universal, to conduct the maidens to a devotion not effeminate, tender, and soft, but powerful, courageous, elevated, and universal." He adds immediately: "Moulding differently the hearts of the novices, according to the diversity of their dispositions, in order to form all to the good pleasure of Him to whose service they are dedicated!"

In this Sister Margaret excelled; powerfully seconded by her extraordinary lights, which enlightened her before-

hand on vocations, and manifested to her the secrets of hearts. It were needless to relate the different proofs of this mentioned in the processes, drawn up in 1715, by the authority of the Bishop of Autun. I shall cite only the deposition of Sister Angelica de Damas. She relates with simplicity what happened to her one day that she was tormented by a secret pain, of which she had not spoken to any one, even her confessor. The Directress, finding her alone, observed that she was greatly troubled. When the novice replied in the negative, Sister Margaret said: "Why would you hide it from me? It is such a temptation, and here is the remedy." Sister Angelica fled, fearing to hear more: but, on reflection, she thought it best to profit by the extraordinary succor God had sent her, and no sooner had she followed the counsel received than the temptation left her.

What a precious advantage to have a mistress so perfectly enlightened as to the wants of the soul, and so eager to aid them! The novices were the first to feel this; they themselves asked for the Servant of God to replace their other mistress, who was ill. How great was their joy when their request was granted! Some, perhaps, of those less inclined to recollection, experienced a certain involuntary uneasiness in the presence of so much sanctity: Sister Margaret Verchère pleasantly said: "She makes us devout in spite of ourselves." Indeed she succeeded, but without anticipating the movements of grace, without imposing on nature too much constraint, in all joy and suavity. Her cordial advances were irresistible, and always resulted in obtaining full confidence. This happened in the case of Margaret Billet, who, being of a very gay disposition, at first kept aloof: this first impression was dissipated to such an extent, that after seven years of profession she asked to

join the novices and make a new apprenticeship to the religious life under their holy Directress, to which the Superior gladly consented.

There were seven in the novitiate: Margaret Billet, Margaret and Rosalie Verchère, Rosalie de Farges, all professed; Mary Bocaud, Christina Bouthier, and Nicolle Declaine, novices.

Two of them, Rosalie Verchère and Rosalie de Farges, realizing a prediction of the Servant of God, assisted at her death, and received her last sigh; a precious favor upon which they congratulated themselves all their lives.

Rosalie Verchère was distinguished among them for her rare privileges. Falling seriously ill, her cure served to manifest the sanctity of her dear Mistress. She had been professed about a year, though she was but seventeen years old, and she preceded in the way of renunciation her eldest sister, Peronne Margaret.

Christina Bouthier of Semur also merits a particular mention. Having suffered much during her novitiate from weakness, on the day of her profession Margaret Mary desired her to ask Our Lord for health, which she did with faith and simplicity. She prostrated herself under the mortuary cloth,* pale and debilitated, and rose up full of strength, her countenance radiant with the lively bloom of health. Her recovery was complete.

If these details, and those which follow, appear to be beneath the dignity of the historian, it will be only necessary to remember that Our Lord chose this obscure novitiate for the cradle of devotion to His Sacred Heart: it recalls, without doubt, the stable of Bethlehem, and the crib, and the shepherds, His first courtiers; since He deigns to dwell among us, He has not changed His incli-

* The *pall* which in some Religious Orders is thrown over each newly professed Sister, to typify her mystic death.—[*Trans.*

nations. It is for us to conform ourselves to His adorable views. Let us leave, then, to this history its divine simplicity, whence comes its strength; and without pride let us gather from the whole a lesson which accords so well with that of the Gospel: If you become not like these little children—for the novices may be well named thus—you shall not enter the Heart of Jesus.

Sister Margaret was for them the most tender of mothers, and if in her spiritual instructions, which have been preserved, there is reason to admire her discernment of spirits, her supernatural prudence, her experience in interior ways, it is still more charming to feel, under each of her words, the beatings of a most loving and devoted heart. See this charming note, which she addressed as a welcome to a young postulant at the moment of her entrance into religion:

"Since God has placed you in the barque of holy religion, you have now but to abandon yourself to holy obedience, and suffer yourself to be entirely guided by it, the true sign of the will of God for you. Have in all you do no view nor desire but to please God: regard Him only in every thing that happens, heedless of the matter which composes your crosses, the crosses He sends you. His good pleasure ought to suffice for you under all circumstances. Repose in His bosom without solicitude, like a child: His love will take care of you. Be humble toward God, and meek toward your neighbor. Judge and accuse only yourself, excuse all others. Always speak of God to praise and glorify Him, of your neighbor with esteem, and never of yourself neither well nor ill.

"If you wish to honor the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, make it the sweet depositary of all you do and suffer, offering your actions to be disposed of and applied

according to His good pleasure; uniting yourself to His holy intentions in all you do, and in all that befalls you. Make your dwelling in that Adorable Heart; carry to it your little pains and troubles; all will there be pacified. You will find there the remedy for your evils, and a refuge in all your necessities.

"Treat with Our Lord simply and confidentially. Do not amuse yourself in reflecting on your faults; that often serves to feed self-love, and discourage us. When we commit any, we must humble ourselves before God, asking pardon, and then, as our holy Founder says, labor with new courage, forgetting self-interest, and remitting all cares into the bosom of the good Celestial Father.

"Once more, I repeat, regard God, not yourself. The more you separate from self, the more will you approach God. Love to be regarded as an abject in the house of the Lord. Cherish and honor those who humble you or mortify you; regard them as your greatest benefactors, and say interiorly: 'If they knew me better, they should see that I deserve still more.'

"When you shall be accused, remember that Jesus Christ did not excuse Himself; and follow His example, even though you should be innocent of the fault you are charged with.

"Think, in all the commands you receive, that Jesus Christ was obedient even to the death of the cross.

"Regard yourself as a beggar, to whom all is given through charity, and who, consequently, cannot complain of injustice, if he be despoiled of all. Finally, strive to conform yourself in all things to your love, Jesus crucified. Do all by love and for love, and employ well the present moment, without disturbing yourself about the future."

This last maxim, which shields the soul from all imagi-

nary perils and trials, is one of those she was most anxious to inculcate on her children, knowing well that this sort of apprehension is one of the most dangerous snares for beginners in the career of perfection; for, commonly enough, the devil, when he cannot do worse, seeks to discourage and weary their good-will beforehand. "You ought to live," said she, "from day to day in perfect abnegation even of things given for your use, and you ought to put away what you feel too much affection for, though the thing be but trifling. Our enemy cares not how he enchains us."

She added another maxim, of which she herself had experience during her novitiate, where we have seen her display great courage in things small in appearance, but strangely painful to nature: "Abjections and humiliations are sometimes more sensible in proportion as they are small, and apparently insignificant; but they will elevate you to God if you sustain them with sweet patience and equality of mind." Behold the kind of perfection which becomes novices from the very beginning; this way is practical and open to no illusion, to no secret ruse of self-love, which finds its account much better in great and shining sacrifices, such as are met with in the lives of the saints. Margaret Mary was a saint herself, and a great saint. I know not whether one can imagine a more passionate desire for crosses, a more ardent love for humiliations; not limited to herself or to her desires, far from it, her whole life was one most painful and loving immolation; she descends not from Calvary, she flies Thabor, she consumes herself night and day as a holocaust; she loves, she seeks only Jesus crucified. But can it be imagined that this great soul would exact of her novices similar heroism? Ah! that would be a libel on her prudence, her perfect discretion; she is too well

instructed in the ways of that God who never demands more than He gives, not to proportion the sacrifices she imposes to the measure of grace given to those on whom she imposes them. No, from souls to whom suffering is terrible, and who experience the horrors which Our Adorable Lord willed to deliver His soul during His Agony in the Garden, she asks only resignation, confidence, cordial acquiescence in the divine will—all that can fortify and console them, far from increasing their trouble; and she leads them to the practice of the virtues common to their state, which are, after all, the basis, the essential foundation of Christian and religious perfection. "Live," she says to one of them, "live, my dear Sister, wholly abandoned to the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, leaving yourself to be governed by His loving Providence, without asking or refusing any thing. But hold yourself always ready to do and suffer all, at the least sign of His will, by the obedience you owe to those who hold His place in your regard. Regard God, and not creatures, in all events: this will enable you to receive equally from His adorable hand consolations and mortifications, sweetness and bitterness, blessing Him for all. Be inviolably faithful to all your holy observances, without neglecting any, however trivial it may appear; thus will you gain the heart of your good Father who tenderly loves you. Fear nothing so long as you are faithful to Him. Do not wilfully commit any fault. Remember that, being the spouse of a crucified God, you should be entirely sacrificed to Him, that He may establish His reign in your soul. His reign is a reign of peace in suffering. Have much gratitude for all His benefits, which are very great in your regard."

Verily, here are counsels which every one may follow, and which will never lead to discouragement. Our holy

Sister shows herself a worthy daughter of St. Francis de Sales, whose discretion and sweetness she possesses. Thus would not have spoken, I am certain, a moralist of Port Royal, a Superior imbued with the sombre spirituality of St. Cyran.

She has sudden thoughts which give conviction at the first stroke. To one of her children who endured great interior pains, she said: "Let your enemy cry: it is a good sign when he makes so much noise; it is a mark that he has had no success as yet."

To the same, she says again: "The Sacred Heart of Jesus knows well what passes in yours; it is He who permits all these pains, to teach you to abandon yourself to Him, and to all His designs on your soul."

What sweet and penetrating eloquence in this exhortation, addressed to one who resisted grace, and could not resolve to abandon herself to the good pleasure of God: "Remember, my beloved Sister, that you have a jealous spouse, who wishes absolutely all your heart or none. If you do not banish the creature, He will leave it, with His love; if you quit Him, He will quit you. There is no medium: He will have all or none. His Heart is worth yours at least. Are you not ashamed to dispute with Him a good which belongs to Him? Truly, I cannot comprehend how He is not yet weary of your resistance. He must have great love for you. Yet you must put your own hand to the work. Think seriously of it, and no longer refuse Him what you know He wills from you. Otherwise, He will deprive you of many graces, and leave you in great aridity. Take care, and be faithful for the future to follow the movements of grace. Leave all, and you shall find all in the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Thus did she understand the devotion to the Sacred Heart, not as a vain practice, stopping at the surface and

visible symbol; but a generous love for Jesus Christ, a love which knows not how to refuse Him any thing, which gives all for all, and which finds no repose but in the Well Beloved. By this she "increased the courage" of her daughters, according to the counsel of St. Francis de Sales, and inspired in them "a devotion not effeminate, tender, and soft, but powerful, courageous, elevated, and universal."

One day that her novices asked her to teach them the true spirit of the Visitation, she replied:

"I will tell you simply my thoughts, according to your wish: you must live entirely abandoned to the mercy of Divine Providence, receiving indifferently health or sickness, labor or repose. Ask nothing, refuse nothing. But keep yourself ready to do and suffer all this Divine Providence wills, whether in prayer or elsewhere. Labor to become perfectly divested of self, and strive to acquire the true spirit of the Visitation, which is profound humility toward God, and great sweetness toward the neighbor. By this humility you will hold yourself annihilated interiorly, as unworthy of the goods, mercies, and graces of Our Lord. This same humility will make you despise all *searches* after the vain esteem and complaisance of creatures, and, in exchange, will make you rejoice in being forgotten, despised, without even believing you are wronged when you are contradicted, humbled, or accused: opposing to all only profound silence, through conformity to our suffering Lord, who wills to use this means to accomplish His work in you; distrusting all suggestions of self-will and self-love, which are offshoots of corrupt nature, and great obstacles to grace. Take for your aspiration, under all circumstances: *Fiat voluntas Tua*, and afterwards say: 'I abandon myself to Thee, my God.'

"Sweetness toward your neighbors will render you

patient and condescending in their regard; charitable in offering your services, despite the repugnance you may feel. When you shall have received any contradiction, pray for whoever has given it to you. Thus will you gain the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, in which you ought to keep yourselves as the weak in a fortress, flying there above all when attacked by your enemies who are within you, and who would trouble and annoy you at the least difficulty that presents itself. But you will find in this Sacred Heart the strength necessary to prevent all things from troubling you, even your defects, for which you should be humbled but not discouraged, being satisfied that they should appear, thereby showing what you are. This faithful practice will keep your soul in peace, and make of it the throne of God. Be, then, content when He shall send you some occasions of suffering, whether from others or from yourself. Receive them as a pledge of His love, eager to make you merit, by these means, that He should render Himself the sole possessor of your heart. No longer, then, withhold from Him so trifling a thing, but to-morrow, after Holy Communion, prostrate in Spirit at His feet, and holding, as it were, your heart in your hand, make Him an entire sacrifice of it, and of all that you are. Entreat Him not to reject you, though you have deserved it for having resisted Him so long. Preserve nothing to yourself but the sole desire of loving and pleasing Him, whatever it may cost you, for He will have all or none. Conform yourself, always, and in all things, to His desires in your regard, destroying all contrary sentiments."

If we could be present at her intimate effusions *tête-à-tête* with her dear children, they would, no doubt, please us still more. She knew how to give them marks of tender and maternal affection, the particular caresses of

which St. Jane Frances speaks—not such as cause foolish wanton imaginings, but others, full of innocence and cordial simplicity, of which the principal one, according to the language of the holy Mother, is to treat the novices sweetly and cordially, with the true heart of a mother and a nurse.

Nothing so invites confidence as confidence itself. She knew this, and she believed it not derogatory to her office, not compromising to her authority, to deposit in the heart of her novices the secrets of her own heart, and to permit their frank glance to penetrate the innermost recesses of her beautiful soul. Little taste as she had for speaking of herself, she sometimes related to them the trials of her childhood, to encourage and support them in similar ones; and in this way several interesting details of her life, not mentioned in her Memoirs, have been rescued from oblivion. One day, being in the garden with Margaret Billet, and showing her a little ruined *solitude*,—probably the place under the hazel-trees, where Our Lord kept her faithful company while she took care of the ass and the foal,—she said: "Here is a place of grace for me; because God there taught me the advantage of suffering, by the knowledge He gave me of His Passion." Amiable simplicity, well suited to a Daughter of St. Francis de Sales! It is thus that he would speak of himself; and I fancy I can see him, in the shade of the almond-trees, listening to this conversation, and smiling at the discourse, so full of sweet simplicity, of this dear Directress.

How these novices loved her! How eager they were to please her! Here is a touching and graceful circumstance—on her feast-day they, having learned from herself that nothing could be more pleasing to her, agreed to offer the first homages to the Heart of Jesus in the

bosom of their little community; so that the first Feast of the Sacred Heart at Paray was truly a family feast, improvised by children to gladden the heart of their mother. Ah! how eloquent are these souvenirs in presence of the solemnities of the Church which have succeeded to this humble feast! So many honors rendered to-day by the whole world to the Heart of Jesus, the eager crowd of adorers who surrounded His tabernacle, the priests, the pontiffs, prostrate at the foot of the altar to pronounce the reparation of honor to which respond millions of voices—all this mounts up to the little source which sprang up one day in the shadow of the cloister, under the finger of God, for it belongs only to Him to make such great things out of such frail ones. Once more the parable of the Gospel is verified, the grain of mustard-seed has become a great tree, it shades the gardens of the Church. But here we see this mysterious grain ascend to the sun with difficulty, in the slow and imperceptible labor of its first germination.

One would easily think that in this first commencement all was wanting, no representation, no symbol of the sacred object to which these first adorers of the Heart of Jesus would address their homages; but their industrious zeal knew how to provide all. With a pen and ink the least skillful among them soon traced on paper the figure of an inflamed heart, surmounted by a cross and encircled by a crown of thorns: in the midst of this heart she wrote this one word, *Charitas;* all around it the blessed names, *Jesus*, *Maria*, *Joseph*, *Anna*, *Joachim*, all the holy family; and thus was hastily executed, with all the incorrectness of a primitive art, the first image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus venerated at Paray. It was placed on a little altar in the dining-room of the novi-

tiate, and surrounded with flowers, which completed the preparations for the feast.*

Then the Directress, prostrate before this symbol of the love of Jesus Christ, consecrated herself to the Divine Heart with the ardors of a seraph. After her, the innocent flock did the same, each repeating aloud the act of consecration. She invited them afterwards to write their sentiments, adding some words to them, according to the dispositions of each. Then of all these billets united she made a bouquet, which she herself offered to Him who sees to the bottom of hearts, and who alone knows all the value of incennoce and purity.

Some of them having been sent to invite the professed to take part in the devotion of the novitiate, these invitations were universally rejected. "Tell your mistress," said the nun to whom Rosalie Virchère addressed herself, "that the best devotion is to practise our rules and constitutions; that is what she should teach you, and what you should practise." And as they sought to dissemble to the Directress what was disobliging in these refusals, saying that the nuns could not come: "Say rather," she replied, "that they would not. But the Heart of Jesus well knows how to attract them. He wishes all through love, and nothing through constraint. We must await His destined time, which will surely come."

The whole day passed in these pious exercises, which fanned in these young hearts the flames the holy Directress had enkindled in them, and in the evening, ravished

* This picture is still preserved at the Visitation of Turin. In a picture from the pencil of M. Savinieu Petit, and destined for Paray, may be seen the result of a happy inspiration to represent it in the hands of Blessed Margaret Mary, of whom it is one of the most natural attributes.

with joy at the sight of these humble first-fruits of her apostolate, she addressed them these touching words: "No, my dear Sisters, you could not do me a more sensible pleasure than to render your homages to the Divine Heart of Jesus Christ, by consecrating yourselves all to Him. How happy are you in that He has willed to make use of you to give birth to the practice of this devotion! Let us continue to pray that it may reign in all hearts." She added: "Ah! what joy for me that this Heart of my Divine Master should be known, loved, and glorified! Yes, my dear Sisters, it would be the greatest consolation I could receive to see it reign everywhere. Let us love it, then, but let us love it without reserve, without exception—let us give all, and sacrifice all, to procure this happiness, and we shall have all in possessing the Heart of God."

Finally, as she never separated suffering from love, she said: "Jesus Christ wishes you to be all things, but this can be only in suffering for Him."

To explain the resistance of the elder nuns: They remembered these words of the eighteenth chapter of their constitutions: "Now, because human minds often take secret complacency in their own inventions, even when it is under pretext of devotion, or of an increase of piety, and that nevertheless it sometimes happens that the multitude of Offices is injurious to the attention, cheerfulness, and reverence with which they ought to be said, it is not allowable, under any pretext whatever, to burden themselves with any other Offices or prayers than those marked in the Constitutions and Directory."

A strict interpretation of this rule would seem contrary to the views of Margaret: it might be answered that there was no question of introducing *new Offices* or prayers, and that assuredly the holy Founder of the Visitation

could not be understood to interdict to his daughters all devotions, all pious exercises not marked in the Constitutions and the Directory, so as to impose on their devotion restrictions unknown even to people of the world. *The Spirit breathes where He wills*, says Jesus Christ. Stifle not, then, *extinguish not the Spirit*, adds the Apostle. And again: *The letter killeth, but the spirit vivifieth.* Where would be the religious Orders if the same Spirit that inspired their holy founders were not to shed the unction of His grace in the hearts of their children, and rejuvenate the old trunk by the sweet fecundity of a sap always new?

Here is what the companions* of Margaret Mary could not understand, when they opposed a devotion so instinct with the spirit of their institute. They attached them-

* As the Visitandines that opposed Margaret Mary *understood* her views at first, it seems to us that they were perfectly justified in opposing her. For they did not comprehend that Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was not exactly a new devotion, but rather a new infusion of the Spirit of Jesus into old devotions. As regards the rules and customs of any religious body, novelty is ruinous; if Superiors should successfully attempt to force on their subjects regulations at variance with the regulations of founders, each Order would soon lose its distinctive character, and consequently its glory. Hence all good Religious have ever regarded it as a duty to resist *all* innovations. Some have even been excessively particular in this respect. Many of the Religious trained by Mother McAuley, for instance, hesitated before consenting that the devotions of the months of May and June, which were not practised in Ireland during her lifetime, should be *publicly* practised in their houses, because *she* had not introduced them, which she could not do, never having heard of them. In the case of Margaret Mary, there were *miraculous* interventions to *prove* that her inspirations were from God, but all were not aware of this—her revelations, after being asserted, had to be proved—and their *apparent* disagreement with the rules naturally made the more observant members slow to admit their divine origin.—[*Trans.*

selves blindly to the letter of their constitutions, to the letter badly comprehended and rigidly and dryly interpreted. Let us not blame them, however; these excessive scruples came from an excellent source, from love of the rule, from respect for the primitive traditions, and they were shared by the most fervent, by those even who were the least suspected of want of friendship for Margaret Mary. Thus a Religious of high virtue, Mary Madeleine des Escures, whom the Directress held in great esteem and particular affection, hesitated not to declare herself against her. Their charity was not cooled, but one may imagine how the heart suffered: all turned at once against their Sister, all abandoned her. They spoke of deposing her, of handing her over to the chief Superiors: the meekness of Mother Melin was repugnant to these violent measures; yet she believed it to be her duty to confine to the novitiate a devotion which had a certain air of novelty, and which excited so much trouble.

Amid these contradictions our Sister had only one fear, it was lest God should be offended. "I remit to Thee, O my Jesus," said she, "the care of defending Thy cause, while I will suffer in silence." Our Lord replied: "I shall reign in spite of My enemies, and of all those who wish to oppose Me." And He made known to her from that time that the Sacred treasure of His Heart should be manifested to the whole Order of the Visitation, and afterwards to the entire world.

CHAPTER XIX.

Parents force their Children to enter Religion.—Extract from Bourdaloue's *Sermon on the Duty of Parents*, &c.—A noble Lady who takes the Habit because she has not Fortune enough to marry according to her Rank.—Her subsequent Unhappiness.—She becomes reconciled to Conventual Life after a lapse of Fifty Years.—Margaret Mary refuses to admit a Vocation of this Nature.—Intense Chagrin of the young Lady's Family.—Also of a "Prince of the Earth."—The Grand Cardinal de Bouillon.—Magnificence of his Retinue.—He visits Paray with the Princes and Princesses of his Family.—Extract from the *Memoirs de Choisy*.—Persecution of Margaret Mary on account of the Dismissed Postulant.—Supernatural Favors.—She sings Spiritual Canticles.—Severity of Mother Melin.

If our age is in general but little propitious to the religious state, on which it lays embargoes by all sorts of ways, legal and extra-legal, it must be acknowledged that the seventeenth century, by going into the opposite extreme, gave rise to embarrassments and perils without number.

Too often, alas! so holy a vocation, becoming the object of interested calculations, served as an auxiliary to the ambition of families. To preserve or increase the patrimony destined to sustain the splendor of a name, it was found convenient to saddle upon the Church and the cloister superfluous subjects. The monastic order was invaded, even in its most obscure retreats, by a crowd of members whom God had not chosen, and who, without any species of attraction for so austere a life, became a burden to communities and a scandal to the world itself.

In truth, the world had little foundation for complaining of an evil in which it had so much share, though it was not the only culpable party. Well, then, where is the officious counselor that will authorize souls to content themselves with a doubtful vocation, or even without any vocation at all? The scruples of religion are infinite in this matter; but they were despised. Singular conflicts when the *rôles* were changed! It was the world that took the lead in this matter, that commanded this renunciation, and that forced the hand of Religion, accustomed to accept only voluntary sacrifices.

Hear the testimony of one of the gravest, and one who would be little suspected of overdrawing the picture. It is truth itself that speaks by his mouth:—

"The establishment of this daughter will be expensive: this is enough without any other motive to destine her to religion.—But she is not called to that kind of life.—She must be so, since there is no other lot for her.—But God does not will her to be in that state.—We must suppose that He wills it, and act as if He willed it.—But she has no sign of a vocation.—There is sign enough in its necessity, and in the present aspect of affairs.—But she herself avows that she has not received this grace of attraction.—This grace will come to her with time, and when she shall be in the proper place to receive it."

Yet this victim is led to the temple, feet and hands bound, I will say, in the disposition of a constrained will, the tongue mute through fear and respect for a father she has always honored. In the midst of a ceremony, brilliant for the spectators, but lugubrious for the object of it, she is presented to the priest, and makes a sacrifice which, far from glorifying and pleasing God, becomes execrable in His eyes, and provokes His vengeance.

And giving free course to his indignation, Bourdaloue,

for he it is, cries out with a voice of thunder: "Ah! Christians, what an abomination! Need we be astonished after this if whole families are struck with the Divine malediction? No, no, says Salvian, with a holy irony, we are no longer in the age of Abraham, when sacrifices of children by their fathers were rare actions. Nothing now more common than imitators of this great patriarch. He is even surpassed daily. For, instead of waiting for an order from heaven, we anticipate it. A child is immolated to God, and immolated without pain, even with joy; and immolated without the command of God, without even His permission—immolated even when God forbids it, and ceases not to exclaim: *Lay not thy hand upon the child!*"*

Ah! God forbid that this eloquent invective should serve as a theme for bitter recriminations against the seventeenth century. This would be but to afford a sad and sterile pleasure: there is question here of the abuses of that century, but we are no longer among these puerilities. Let us rather look to ourselves; let us think of the too real evils from which we suffer, and which crush out the life from souls to their profoundest depths. The past is for us matter of history, necessary to explain what follows, and of history intimately connected with that of the monastery in which our holy Sister lived. Behold why we reawaken the echoes of one of the greatest voices that ever resounded from the Christian pulpit. The picture Paray presents sufficiently justifies the language of Bourdaloue, which at the same time receives from it a most lively illustration.

The lady whose establishment would be "expensive," and who for that reason alone was destined to the cloi-

* Gen. xxii. Sermon for the first Sunday after the Epiphany: *On the duty of* FATHERS *with reference to the vocation of their* CHILDREN.

ter, it is easy for us to point out in the bosom of this community. One of this class was Mary Benigna de Fautrières-Courcheval,* a name not unknown to us, having already seen it figure at the Baptism of Margaret. God had never spoken to the heart of this lady of rank. He had not said to her: *Forget thy people and thy father's house*, but the world had warned her not to count on it, and behold why she quitted it, not without regret. "She took the habit," say the memoirs, "seeing that she had not fortune enough to establish herself according to her birth." What terrible combats had she not to sustain to break herself to the religious life, to accustom herself to the cloister! During the half hour of repose allowed the novices in the hot days of summer, she ceased not to make a tour of the inclosure, and to look at the high walls, saying: Thou shalt never pass these limits! Let us be just; she became, later on, a good Religious, and after fifty years of profession she renewed her vows with joy; a rare example, and one from which it would not be safe to draw any conclusion in favor of this sort of vocation.

What is to be thought of the family arrangements which fixed at Paray, very evidently without consulting their tastes, three daughters of the Count of Amanzé? The Abbé Amanzé, their uncle, gives this sufficiently to be understood in his juridical deposition, which forms part of the information collected in 1715.

Having explained himself on the reputation for sanctity enjoyed by the Servant of God, and the supernatural gifts attributed to her, he is led to speak of what concerns his nieces, to-day established in the world, "who,"

* It will be remembered that Margaret's grandmother was Margaret de Saint-Amour, lady of Courcheval, to whom apparently Sister Benigna was nearly related.

says he, "had been placed as pensioners with a view of consecrating them to God, *because there were three sons.* The said Sister Alacoque affirmed that their manœuvring was in vain; that these ladies would not be religious; that they would be heiresses, because they would survive their brothers, which happened, contrary to all appearances, these gentlemen all dying in less than three years, in the service of the king, all unmarried. The three sisters then left the convent, and there was no more question of dedicating them to God. Who can help seeing in this unexpected event, with the proof of the prophetic lights of Margaret, one of those terrible chastisements with which Bourdaloue threatens parents who rid themselves of their children, in contempt of the sacred rights of conscience, and to the great prejudice of religion?

Let us take another example, it will be our last:

There were then in the monastery of Paray four ladies of Vichy-Chamron, cousins of the Amanzés, and daughters of the Count de Vichy-Chamron, Governor of Bourbon Lancy. As has been already said, these two houses, united by an alliance, made a great figure in the Province of Burgundy. Three of these ladies, namely: Madeleine Victoria, Mary Josephine, and Frances Eleanor, took the holy habit at Paray, the first two receiving it from the hands of Cardinal de Bouillon, a particular friend of their family, October 17, 1687. What became of the fourth, we know not. Like the others, she was destined by her family for the cloister, for we read in the notice of Mary Josephine: "One of the young ladies, her sister being in the novitiate,, and not seeming inclined to our way of life, our dear Sister herself applied to her relations to take away this young lady, thereby exposing herself to a thousand little chagrins to do this service to the community, who saw with pleasure that she

took sides against her own family in this matter." Is it not perhaps this fourth lady of Vichy-Chamron that gave occasion to the persecution we are about to relate? Our memoirs show us the holy Directress refusing courageously to sanction by her suffrage a vocation in which she saw not the true marks of the Spirit of God, and by this act of bravery exposing herself to the resentment of a powerful family, and even of a *prince of the earth*. Who is this prince of the earth? In our opinion it is Cardinal Bouillon, who, as Abbot Commendatary of Cluny, was also Lord of Paray, and whom we have seen give the veil to two of the ladies of Vichy-Chamron. He was certainly a prince of the Church, but he pretended above all to be a prince by birth; and it is known, too, that like all his race, not even excepting his uncle, the great Turenne, he showed himself most jealous of the prerogatives of his house. Friend of the Count of Vichy-Chamron, he would have taken it very ill that the monastery should refuse to receive all the daughters* of this nobleman; we may therefore at least conjecture the source of the storm which burst upon the head of Sister Margaret, the principal cause of a refusal so keenly felt by this

* The three ladies of Amanzé and the four ladies of Vichy-Chamron, had already seen three of their aunts Amanzé professed at Paray. Moreover, their common grandmother there ended her days. We read in the mortuary register of the monastery: "December 4, 1684, died in this monastery of the Visitation, Paray, the high and puissant lady, Madame Frances de Mypon, widow of Gaspard, Count of Amanzé, after having passed seven years in this house in the practice of all virtues. She was buried in the vault of our cemetery with the religious habit." We see by this that the little colony founded in the monastery by these two noble houses was composed of eleven persons in all, as much religious as pensioners. These houses formed a power which it was considered essential to propitiate.

family. This will explain, with the semblance of probability, an incident in which the Servant of God displayed *invincible constancy*,* not without also casting some light, the reflex of an epoch already so distant and so completely vanished, on the narrow and obscure theatre when this little drama is re-enacted before our eyes. The Cardinal was a very great personage; at the Conclave of 1676, he had astonished Rome by the number and gorgeousness of his equipages, by his unheard-of magnificence;† it is probable that he did not leave all his grandeur outside the monastery when he honored it with his visits, and it was necessary to be very humble in order not to be dazzled by it. Now our memoirs say, "that nothing could be added to the honors this great Cardinal did to our very honored Sisters de Chamron, during his sojourn in this town. The princes his nephews, and the princesses of Auvergne and Montbazon, his sister-in-law and his niece, did not permit him to eclipse them in this respect."

These details, preserved with care by the annalist of the monastery, show us how the Cardinal esteemed the family of Vichy-Chamron, while at the same time they give us a glimpse of the importance attached, deservedly or undeservedly, to these princely friendships. That a little of the spirit of the world should penetrate the

* This is the very language of the Church: Contumelias quoque ac minas ob nobilum alumnam a tirocinio fortiter dismissam invicta constantia toleravit." [*Office of the Blessed Margaret*, IVth Lesson.

† Choisy, who assisted with him at the Conclave, speaks of it in these terms: "The Cardinal de Bouillon remained in Rome six weeks after the conclave, at enormous expense. He had twenty-four pages and sixty foot-servants around his chaise every evening, holding torches of white wax, and twenty-eight carriages with his arms and liveries, two of which he sent to each Frenchman of rank that arrived at Rome."—[*Memoirs de Choisy.*

cloister in the train of so much human grandeur is but natural, and the contrary would be truly a prodigy. Happily, God placed on the threshold a vigilant and intrepid sentinel, by whom His house was well guarded.

The young postulant who presented herself at this time (1685), and who was the involuntary cause of so much trouble, came from the boarding-school where she had received from infancy the cares of the Mothers and Sisters. They knew her, or at least they thought they knew her, for her natural timidity made it very difficult to penetrate her. She greatly feared her father, who loved her less than her sisters; never would she excite his anger by resisting a will before which she had been accustomed to bend. She took, as of her own accord, all the steps necessary to enter the novitiate, and the Superior had no reason to think that she was not called to the religious state. Gentle, complying, docile, and faithful to the observances, she had known how to conciliate the esteem and friendship of the entire community. The clear-sighted Margaret alone shared not the general delusion; the Heart of Jesus revealed to her many secrets! She interrogated the postulant, she tried her, and, convinced that she was not made for the cloister, she warned the Superior, and through her the parents of the young lady.

In similar difficult conjunctures she had often been consulted, even before she exercised the office of Directress; she had a very simple way of dissipating all doubts; this was to recur to Mary, beseeching her not to permit in her house any persons except such as she herself had chosen for her daughters; and this means always succeeded. If any error were committed, God repaired it. More than once, unexpected events prevented or broke the decisions, which, if carried out, had been soon

subjects for bitter repentance for the whole Sisterhood.

The father of the postulant, a haughty noble, singularly jealous of his despotic authority, received very ill a communication which he was far from expecting, and which upset all his plans. Alarm was spread through the community; the reasons which were supposed to justify this grave decision were warmly discussed, and the opinions were divided, the postulant continuing obstinately to dissemble her antipathy, and protest the sincerity of her attraction for the religious life. In the midst of these various movements, the holy Directress remained inflexible; neither the anger of the father nor the indecision of the nuns moved her; she played her part so well that the timid postulant herself asked to be sent home, and her father was obliged to consent to this.

But in taking away his daughter, the irritated father believed himself obliged to observe no discretion toward a community guilty, in his eyes, of placing a blind confidence in one whom he openly denounced as a visionary and a fool. The complaints of such a powerful man could not fail to be echoed, and soon the parlor was filled with people expressly come to insult and scold the Blessed Sister. They loudly exclaimed that she ought to be deposed from an office which she was incapable of exercising, and that to constrain the Superior on this point, recourse would be had to the Episcopal authority. Some even added that the community could not recover the effects of so discreditable an éclat, and that an extraordinary chastisement, the prison for instance, would be the only means of repairing the scandal. Finally, they spoke of handing over the pretended culprit to the secular power, and making her appear before that *earthly prince*, designated in the Memoirs only by dark and

obscure terms. Before a prince, whoever he might be, she was but an atom; but we may be sure that her courage would not flinch. Things, however, did not come to this extremity. Doubtless this mighty personage, if indeed his intervention were sought, disdained to discharge the power of his arm on so mean a creature.

There came to Paray, about this time, a celebrated Religious, whose reputation for virtue was enhanced by the prestige of his birth, and who was considered a great Servant of God. The whole affair was reported to him: even the wisest deferred to his judgment, which ought, according to all appearances, to be exempt from passion. God permitted the contrary. Prejudiced in favor of the noble family of the postulant, he warmly espoused its cause, treated Blessed Margaret as a hypocrite, a visionary, said her brain was diseased, and went so far as to affirm that all her devotion was only grimaces. The authority of a man so highly esteemed shook the community anew, and turned many against the holy Directress. Neither lectures nor reproaches were spared her. "We are done with novices," said they: "who would now confide his daughter to a mistress so decried, at the risk of being affronted like these people of high rank?" She heard all without complaint, without answering a single word to all the mortifying things said. She lost not her serenity for a moment, appeared in the parlor whenever any one called to put her patience to new trials, and the day the postulant departed, she was seen to kneel before her in presence of the whole community, and humbly ask pardon for the displeasure she had occasioned her in the exercise of her office.

This is like the saints! they accuse only themselves. What is more surprising is, that she accepted as just the most outrageous reproaches, so conformable were they

to the low sentiments she had of herself. She wrote at this epoch to Mother de Saumaise:

"I am afflicted in many ways, but the worst is to see myself the sport of the devil. I see nothing in myself but what is worthy of punishment, since I have not only been unhappy enough to deceive myself, but have also deceived others by my hypocrisy, though, as it seems to me, unintentionally. I can no longer doubt of it after the opinion of this great Servant of God. I have reason to thank God a thousand times for having sent him to me to undeceive those who had been indulgent enough to preserve some esteem for me. What a singular obligation I shall owe him all my life for having done me this important service! I can assure you that nothing gives me greater consolation than to know that creatures being undeceived, I shall be able to satisfy the justice of God, and remain forever disregarded. This thought soothes me, and sweetens all I suffer."

The sentiments expressed in the above letter would from others seem like irony, but with her there is not a shadow of it; nothing is more sincere than this love of the contempt which she regards as her just due. Her letters to Father Rollin, a holy Jesuit whom God sent to sustain her in this long combat, are of the same tone as the preceding, and it was necessary that this wise Director should fortify her against her excessive fear of illusions.

It cannot be thought that the novices were insensible to the injuries heaped on their beloved mistress. Their zeal, if it had not been confined within proper limits, would have proved itself indiscreet: but their Directress was not the one to permit this; she urged them to remember the submission which so well suited their modest rank, and wrote them a long letter full of wisdom and firmness, from which we shall cite some passages: —

"My very dear Sisters in the Sacred Heart of Jesus: I cannot express the grief I feel in seeing you make such bad use of so precious an opportunity of giving God proofs of love and fidelity. It is He Himself who has permitted the invention of this cross to prepare us for its festival, and, instead of lovingly embracing it, we only endeavor to shake it off and rid ourselves of it. Not being able to succeed, we commit a thousand offenses which fill the Divine Heart with sorrow.

"Whence comes this if it be not that we have too much love for ourselves, which makes us fear to lose our reputation, and the good esteem of the world? This it is that makes us seek to justify our conduct. We believe we are right and that others are wrong. O believe me, my dear Sisters, humble souls are far from entertaining such thoughts; they always think themselves more guilty than their accusers say."

She had a good right to give this lesson, having practised it so perfectly herself!

She then recommends submission, forgiveness, silence, greater assiduity in all their pious exercises, prayer for the souls in purgatory—finally, renewed efforts to re-enter the Heart of Jesus, to establish the devotion to it in the whole community. She concludes in the following terms:

"But, in the name of Our Lord, let there be no more considerations, no excuses of self-love. Let us be silent in the occasions of mortification. Let us be charitable and humble in our thoughts and words. If you be more faithful in this, the Sacred Heart will be more liberal of His graces than ever he has been; but if on the contrary you fail, I will myself entreat Him to punish you. Give yourselves to God, yes, and all to God; carry His Cross cheerfully, joyously, courageously; otherwise you will have to render a most rigorous account of it."

Her novices were to be the first stones of the edifice she wished to raise to the glory of the Divine Heart, and it seemed every moment that they would be snatched from her arms, and thus that her design would be greatly retarded. As the devil redoubled his attacks, and ceased not to raise up outside new enemies, who solicited her deposition, God Himself was careful to re-assure her. On Christmas Day, 1685, He showed her all her dear children under the figure of innocent lambs, and said to her, as to St. Peter: *Feed My lambs.* She understood that she was to direct them during the ensuing year, to put the finishing stroke to her work.

She was indeed left in the office, but the persecution did not cease. It sometimes seemed to her that "all hell was unchained against her, that all conspired to annihilate her." God alone was for her, but was not that enough? "I confess," wrote she, "that I never enjoyed greater interior peace than when threatened with the prison, and with being brought before an earthly prince, as my Divine Master was."

Of all she then had to endure, only one thing pained her, because it concerned the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and her love for the Adorable Sacrament of the altar: the only vulnerable part indeed of a soul entirely dead to the world and to self-love. This trial, her last of that nature, was more severe than all she had ever endured from her Superiors.

It will be remembered that in the first years of her religious profession Our Lord had prescribed her two practices: the Holy Hour, and communion on the first Friday of every month. After being assured of the will of God, Mother de Saumaise granted her both. If Mother Greyffié for once interdicted the Holy Hour, soon warned by the death of Sister Elizabeth, she hastened to restore it,

but she never hindered her from communicating on the first Friday. It was in the Blessed Sacrament that Margaret received strength to vanquish the numerous obstacles that impeded the establishment of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. With what inflamed ardor did she not always approach the holy table: greater from day to day grew the vehemence of her desires. She had not hesitated if in order to receive the God of her heart it were necessary *to walk over burning coals.* On the vigil she was wholly transported with joy, and could not sleep the entire night, which she passed in amorous colloquies. After communion, she remained annihilated in presence of her God, her soul inundated with ravishing joy, her whole interior keeping silence to hear the voice of her Beloved. "O Love, O Love," she exclaimed, "O excess of love of a God toward so miserable a creature!"

Our Lord sometimes took pleasure in proving the purity of her love. "Which would you rather," said He one day, "to receive Me once unworthily and afterwards enjoy My paradise, or to be deprived of receiving Me in order that I should be more glorified, and then to be precipitated into hell?" "Love instantly made the choice," said she, and the response: "O my Lord, open this abyss, and the desire of Thy glory will soon make me plunge into its depths." "So much pain did I feel," added she, "at the thought that this bread of life should be received unworthily."

One Good Friday, perhaps it was a first Friday, too, feeling great regret that it was not possible for her to receive Our Lord, she said to Him with many tears: "Amiable Jesus, I would gladly consume myself in desiring Thee; not being able to possess Thee to-day, I shall not cease to desire Thee." He then came to console her by His sweet presence, and said to her: "My daughter, thy

desire has so touched My Heart, that if I had not instituted this Sacrament of love, I should do so now to become thy food. I take so much pleasure in being longed after, that as often as the heart forms this desire, so often do I fix My eyes on it to attract it to Myself." And this view was so deeply imprinted on her, that she experienced great pain in thinking that her Jesus was so little loved and desired in this Sacrament. Nothing saddened her so much as to see that some persons separated themselves from it, and spoke of it with coldness and indifference. After the example of the first Mothers of the Visitation and of St. Jane Frances herself, she sometimes composed spiritual canticles, in which shed elighted to celebrate the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and the infinite treasures of His Sacred Heart.

She might be heard singing in a low, sweet voice

Beneath the shadows of this host *
Where naught but love enchains Him,
He wounds my heart with piercing dart,
For deepest love inflames Him.
To give it life triumphantly
He conquers it eternally!

Her Superiors and companions knew that nothing was so precious to her as the Holy Communion, and that, after having received her God, she would willingly spend the rest of her time at the foot of the altars. And behold, after twelve years she is deprived of the communion of the first Friday of the month, which had been granted to her only at the express command of Our Lord, and which

* C'est à l'ombre de cette hostie
Qu'il a blessé mon pauvre cœur:
Pour lui communiquer sa vie,
Il s'en est rendu le vainqueur.

was at once the prelude and the pledge of the graces the Heart of Jesus was to shed on the Order of the Visitation, and on the whole Church. Oh! how bitterly she felt this! She would have preferred the prison a thousand times, provided she was not there separated from her Adorable Master. It may seem surprising that Mother Melin, with her extreme meekness, should have imposed on her holy child so cruel a trial; but who knows whether she was free to follow the inspirations of her own heart? Apparently, the persons who insisted on the deposition of the Holy Directress represented to this Superior, that, since she maintained her in the exercise of her charge, the least she could do to satisfy the clamors raised against her on all sides, was to reduce her in all things to the common life, and not to suffer her any longer to enjoy a privilege so exceptional. Thus Mother Melin surpassed with one stroke all the rigors of Mothers de Saumaise and Greyffié; God so permitting it, that each of her Superiors should acknowledge that *she* was nothing less than the interpreter of His adorable will, and that they should all hear her under pain of displeasing Him.

In these days of affliction, bereft of her Beloved, she no doubt said with her Spouse in the Canticles: Daughters of Jerusalem, be not astonished that I am brown, for the Sun of Justice Himself hath robbed me of the brilliancy of my color. She might have added: The children of my mother have stood up against me. The nearer the hour of victory, the more violent was the combat and the more menacing the enemy.

CHAPTER XX.

Illness and Cure of Sister Verchère.—Margaret consults Sister Des Escures.—Father Rollin, S. J.—He desires her to write her Memoirs.

What happened shortly after should have been a great subject of reflection to Mother Melin, especially if she remembered that Mother Greyffié, for having contravened the will of God upon His Servant, was wounded in her most sensitive part by the death of Sister Quarré; and she herself was near having a loss not less painful to deplore for having retrenched to Margaret the Communion of the first Friday.

It will be remembered, perhaps, that Sister Rosalie Verchère was a young professed of great promise, who shared with the novices the cares of the Blessed Margaret, and who was with Sister de Farges to receive her last sigh. Still in the flower of her age, for she was but eighteen, she fell grievously ill, and in a few days she was apparently past all hope of recovery. Margaret having prayed to God for her restoration, it was told her that this Sister would continue to suffer till the Superior revoked the decision concerning the communion of the first Friday. We may imagine the confusion of the humble Directress, obliged to explain herself on this new testimony of the infinite tenderness of her celestial Spouse. She suffered rude combats, desiring on one hand nothing but to obey in silence, and, on the other, pressed by Our Lord to tell the Superior how much she displeased Him

by resisting His will. Not being able to resolve of herself to make known the graces she had received from her Sovereign, she had recourse to an ancient Sister, Mary Madeleine des Escures, in whom she had great confidence, and whose soul was united to hers by the bonds of a holy and generous friendship. She wrote to her thus: "It is in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord that I write this, my dear Sister, since He has so willed it. Do not be surprised that I address myself to you, in the extreme pain I suffer on account of Sister Verchère. This morning, when rising, I seemed to hear distinctly these words: 'Tell thy Superior that she has greatly displeased Me to please creatures (that is, those who had taken part against Margaret), by retrenching the communion I ordered thee to make the first Friday of every month, to satisfy (by offering to My Eternal Father the merits of my Sacred Heart) His Divine Justice for the faults committed against charity. For I have chosen thee to be a victim: and when she forbade thee to accomplish My will, I resolved to sacrifice this other victim who now suffers instead of thee.'

"Here is, my dear Sister, what torments me, and persecutes me continually, because He urges me to tell this to our Mother; and I fear to do it, to speak frankly, because I think it may be some ruse of the enemy, who wishes to make me singular by this communion, or that it may be illusion or imagination, because it is not to a miserable hypocrite like me that Our Lord would do such a favor. I conjure you, my dear Sister, to tell me what you think, since He wishes me to recur to you. Do me this favor without flattering me. For I fear to resist God, nor can I explain what I suffer in seeing her (Sister Verchère) in such a state. Ask Him to show you the truth, and the answer He wishes you to give me. After which

I shall strive to think no more of it. I pray you to burn this note and to keep my secret, my very dear Sister."

Sister Des Escures hesitated not to advise her to declare all to the Superior, which she did, despite her extreme repugnance. Mother Melin answered that she might go to communion on the first Friday, provided she would pray for the restoration of Sister Verchère. She obeyed, and the sickness, which was already desperate, and of a nature unknown to the physicians, instantly disappeared.

However, Margaret Mary having considered the words of the Superior only as a promise, durst not make the communion without a special command, so great was her horror of being taxed with singularity. But the invalid, snatched from the jaws of death, began again to suffer great pains, which disconcerted all the efforts of physicians. During five or six months that she stayed in the infirmary, her holy Directress frequently visited her, exhorting her to make a good use of her pains, and to bear them patiently for love of God. At the same time she conjured the Heart of Jesus to perfect what He had just begun, and restore the patient entirely. But Our Lord having positively declared to her that she should be heard only when she resumed her Communions, she determined to speak anew to the Superior, who could not now resist a will so clearly manifested. Immediately, Sister Verchère was completely cured, to the great joy of her mistress, who tenderly cherished her. But what was her consolation to be able at length to unite herself unconstrainedly to Him, who was ever her whole delight, and to respond to the eager desires of the God of her heart! When she enjoyed this incomparable happiness, her novices saw her come to them all inflamed, and each of her words enkindled in their hearts the fire of Divine love. "Ah! my dear sisters," would she say, "our whole

occupation is to know and serve God. Your portion is to love His Heart. What happiness to be able to say: 'Yes, I will love Him and praise Him for an eternity!' But we must, for that end, love Him constantly and equally in afflictions as in consolations, and in all the accidents of life."

Outside, as we have said, the annoyance of her enemies did not lessen. They made her frequent threats, continuing to treat her as a visionary and a hypocrite, and to make their insinuations with such artifice that the most upright minds could hardly avoid being influenced by them. Among those who were for a while deceived, the Memoirs mention Father Rollin, a Jesuit of eminent piety, who became about this time Superior of the house at Paray.* Yet God had destined him to sustain her during the hard combats of this long trial (1685-1687), and to serve as her guide, even at the moment when she was in the act of ascending the last steps to establish herself on the highest summit of pure love. The first time he saw her all his prejudices ceased—a second interview gave him an extraordinary idea of the graces with which she was favored, and a very ardent desire to aid her to the utmost of his power. For herself, in her heroic disinterestedness she was pursued by a fear, namely, that this man of God, if he openly took her part, would only

* The same who exercised the functions of minister and professor of metaphysics in the College of Nimes, 1688, according to an old manuscript catalogue of the Province of Lyons. In 1700, we find him procurator and director of a congregation of men in the College of Grenoble, where he still was in 1715, in an office purely spiritual. The contemporaries of Margaret speak of him thus: "A very worthy Religious of the Society of Jesus, who was then in Paray, in great repute, and who is now retained at Grenoble on account of the esteem in which his virtue and sanctity are held."

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lose his credit, his reputation for knowledge and prudence in the direction of souls. But he soon eased her of that scruple. Their mutual intercourse shows that if she had full confidence in him, the Father on his side took greatly to heart the care of so privileged a soul. He saw in her an insatiable desire of humiliations and sufferings, with all the transports of the holy folly of the cross, living, breathing only for Jesus crucified; so abased, so vile in her own eyes, that she had a horror of herself; diffident of herself to such an extent that she feared every moment lest she should be deceived, and be the sport of the devil; she who should have been able, it would seem, to draw some security from her long trials and from the reiterated opinions of the most eminent directors of the soul.

"No, my Father," she wrote to him, "nothing in the world is capable of pleasing me but the cross of my Divine Master—a cross like to His, that is to say, heavy, ignominious, without comfort, without sweetness, without relief. Let others be happy in ascending Thabor with my Saviour; as for me, I am satisfied to know no other road than that of Calvary; hence I find attractions only for the cross. My portion will then be to remain in Calvary till the last sigh—among scourges, thorns, nails, and crosses, without any other consolation or pleasure than to have none. And what a happiness, to be always able to suffer in silence, and at last to die on the cross, crushed beneath the weight of all sorts of misery, mental and bodily; forgotten and contemned, for one cannot please me without the other. Bless, then, my reverend Father, and thank for me our Sovereign Master, for having honored me so lovingly and liberally with His precious cross, not leaving me a moment without suffering. Ah! what should I do without it in this valley of tears, when I lead such a criminal life that I regard myself as a sink

of misery, and cannot help fearing that my sins will render me unworthy of the infinite happiness of carrying the cross to assimilate myself to my crucified Jesus. I beseech you, if you have any charity for me, to pray this amiable Saviour not to be rebuked by the bad use I have heretofore made of the precious treasure of the cross, that He may not deprive me of the happiness of suffering; for that is all the consolation I find in the weary length of my exile. Let us then not fail to suffer in silence. The cross is good in all times and places to unite us to Jesus Christ, suffering and dying. We cannot truly love Him without suffering, and I can say that I do not love Him enough, since it seems to me that I suffer so little; that my greatest suffering is not to suffer enough. It pleases me to know that others are ingulfed in the sweetness of joyful love, but I desire no better than to be abyssed in the sorrows of pure, suffering love. I feel that I satisfy myself too much in speaking to you of sufferings, but I cannot do otherwise, for the burning thirst I have for them is a torment I cannot explain; and yet I feel that I know not either how to suffer or how to love, which makes me fear that all I say is a pure effect of my self-love, and of secret pride that lives in me. Ah! I fear that all these ideas of suffering are but artifices of the demon to amuse me with vain and sterile sentiments. Tell me simply what you think."

The man of God was obliged to respond to these astonishing scruples: "No," he says, "the spirit that leads you is not the spirit of darkness; its conduct is good, since it is always submissive to obedience, and leaves you in repose when your Superior has spoken. All its effects are very good. There is no danger, except when you do not permit yourself to be guided by it." As to the fears she had once expressed with reference

to himself, his answer is: "Let them complain as much as they will, but fear nothing for me; the saintly Father de la Colombière is my guarantee." But she must always hold herself in readiness for the greatest rigors: "Whatever they say to you, rejoice; dismission, imprisonment, all proceeds from the love of Jesus Christ for you. I ask of you the abandonment of a heart ready to do and suffer all." He closes his letter by this conclusion, so consoling for our heroic lover of the Cross: "I reiterate what I have said: you are not the sport of Satan, but of divine love; for it is the language of Scripture that sacred love has its rigors, whether because it is the offspring of Calvary, or because it partakes of the divine justice, which wishes to satisfy itself at our expense." Among the monuments of the confidence of Margaret Mary in this wise Director, there is one, the value of which will not be unappreciated by the readers of this book. We mean the Memoir of her life, which she wrote by his orders. Nothing better paints her than this candid autobiography, this entire manifestation of herself, in a style so frank, so natural, and occasionally so eloquent. Thus we have been delighted to take from it, here and there, long pages, and enchase them in our recital as precious jewels. If it be not a faithful picture of her life, since she has omitted all that might turn to her praise, it is at least a most faithful picture of her interior; for it is a pure ray of the Sun of Justice, reflected by her beautiful soul, that has, if we may say so, reproduced and stereotyped all the traits. In the extreme violence she did herself to discover things she had always concealed, she once interrupted herself to complain to her Divine Master, who replied: "Go on, My child, go on; it will be neither better nor worse for thy repugnances; My will must be accomplished."

"But alas! my God, how can I remember all that passed during twenty-five years?"—"Knowest thou not," He replied, "that I am the eternal memory of My heavenly Father, in which the past and the future are ever present? Write, then, fearlessly, as I dictate to thee. I will shed upon thy writing the unction of My grace, that I may be glorified by it." And He added: "I desire this of thee for three reasons:—

"First, to make thee see that I laugh at all the precautions thou hast taken to hide the graces with which I have been pleased to enrich thee, poor, weak creature that thou art. Thou oughtest never to lose the remembrance of these graces, but render Me continual thanks for them.

"In the second place, to teach thee that thou shouldst not appropriate these graces, nor fear to communicate them; for I wish to use thy heart as a channel to spread them according to My designs on souls. Several will effectually be snatched by this means from the brink of perdition, as I shall show thee hereafter.

"In the third place, to prove that I am the Eternal Truth; that I am faithful to My promises; and that the graces I have given thee will bear all sorts of proofs and examinations."

Another time she interrupts her recital to exclaim: "O, my Lord and my God, who alone knowest the pain I suffer in writing this, and the violence with which I surmount the repugnance and confusion I feel, give me grace to die rather than insert any thing but what comes from Thy spirit, and can give Thee glory and me confusion. Grant in Thy mercy that this writing may not be seen by any one but him by whom Thou willest it to be examined, in order that it may not hinder me from being

buried in eternal contempt and oblivion by creatures. My God, give this consolation to Thy poor slave."

"As I made this request," she proceeds, "I received this response: 'Abandon all to My good pleasure, and leave Me to accomplish My designs without mingling thyself in any thing. I shall take care of all.'" She candidly confessed that Father de la Colombière had formerly given her the same order as Father Rollin, without positively insisting on it, and that she found means to elude it, so great was her repugnance.

"He commanded me also to write what passed within me, to which I felt a mortal repugnance. I wrote it to obey him, and then burned what I had written, persuading myself that I had sufficiently satisfied obedience. But I suffered much on this account, as I had great scruples for acting in such a manner, and I was desired not to do so again."

Toward the end of the Memoir may be seen the state in which the Devotion to the Sacred Heart was at Paray when the Servant of God wrote it. After having briefly recounted the first beginnings of this Devotion in the novitiate, she adds these simple words: "It drew on me, and on the novices also, many humiliations, contradictions, and mortifications. I was accused of wishing to introduce a new devotion. On one hand these sufferings consoled me, but on the other I feared immensely lest this Divine Heart should be dishonored. Every word I heard against this devotion was as a sharp sword that transpierced my heart. I was forbidden to place any pictures of this Sacred Heart where they could be seen, and told that all I could expect was, to be permitted to honor it in secret. I had no one to whom I could recur in my afflictions, but Himself. He always sustained my drooping courage, saying: 'Fear not, I will reign

in spite of contradictions.' These words consoled me much, for I breathed only to see Him reign. I remitted to Him then the care of defending His cause, while I continued to suffer in silence."

CHAPTER XXI.

Our Lord complains to His dear Spouse of the Infidelities of His chosen People.—The Blessed Virgin joins her Complaints to those of her Divine Son.—The Founders of the Visitation visit Margaret.—Multiplied Secessions from the Visitation Order.—Response of Mother de Chantal, when asked whether it was lawful to leave the Visitation to accept an Abbey.—Sentiments of Madame de Montmorency on the same Subject.—The Visitandines petition the King not to grant Abbeys to Members of their Order.—The Bishop of Puy.—Relaxation in the Visitation Houses.—Revelations of Our Lord to His Spouse.

Who has not already comprehended it? the noble and invincible resistance of Margaret to a false vocation urged by a high and potent family, was, for her community and for the whole Visitation Order, a most salutary example and precedent. Of all the dangers with which the Order could be then menaced, I know of none more terrible or more injurious. If the monastery of Paray did not escape in its obscurity, how must the case have been in large cities and in the vicinity of the court? This door once opened, the egress of the religious spirit must necessarily follow.

That girls, condemned to exile themselves from the world still living in their hearts, should become, by the mere fact of residing in a convent, humble, submissive, and mortified, would be a miracle not to be expected; for God, who has not promised it, was not bound to facilitate to them the practice of religious perfection and the evangelical counsels. Many of them only entered the cloister

as a resource: so much so, that an unexpected legacy or dower was sufficient to tempt them back to the world. Even after pronouncing the solemn vows, an abbey could lure them out: to be called the Lady Abbess, to carry the crozier, to govern a little State, in which opulence generally reigned, to exercise seigneurial rights, to receive, in the guest-rooms of the monastery, a brilliant and numerous company, was not without its *prestige*, and so flattering a prospective, though seen only afar off, was not very conducive, it may be conjectured, in causing to flourish in the heart the virtues most dear to the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales, humility, simplicity, sweetness, love of Jesus crucified, and of the rules and constitutions.

To a Religious who asked Mother de Chantal whether it were lawful to quit the Visitation to possess some grand abbey or priory—"Lord Jesus!" replied she, "what do you say, my very dear Sister? is there one among us who would for a moment entertain or hear of such a proposition? Certainly, if there be she is no true child of the Visitation, but a demon sent from the abysses of the malice of hell, to destroy and overthrow our whole Institute, all its happiness, peace, and sanctity. I believe, nevertheless, that God has permitted this question, to the end that I may tell you, my dearest Sisters, the intentions and sentiments of our holy Founder on this point. Oh! how far was he from entertaining it! I tell you that it was as far from his views as heaven is from earth. He said he would rather see the Order perish than open a door to this pernicious and monstrous ambition, which would destroy it. He had such an intense aversion to it, that I have no words capable of expressing it to you. I can assure you, that, if he believed this folly could ever creep into the heads of his daughters, in my opinion he had never founded the Congregation of St. Mary at all."

These sentiments were shared by all true Religious of the Visitation. Madame de Montmorency, that illustrious Daughter of the foundress, had no others. While she governed the monastery of Moulins, the Marquis of Valançay having confided to her his two daughters, she was careful to admonish him prudently: "That, if he had any design to make his daughters abbesses, he would do well to take them away before their profession, for if, after that, he should do it, he could not afflict her more grievously; and, if he did it even after her death, her ashes would be disturbed and troubled in the grave."

In the same house, Henrietta Mary de Ventadour refused an abbey of forty thousand livres, which the Duchess her mother had obtained for her. But, without going so far, I see one of the ladies of Vichy-Chamron give a similar example to Paray: Madeleine Victoria, the eldest, refused to succeed her aunt, the Abbess of St. Colombe-lez, Vienne.*

Unfortunately, side by side with these beautiful examples of humility and Christian abnegation, there are others of a contrary nature, and in great number; which should not surprise us; for it was very natural that persons sacrificed to family ambition, and to interests wholly human, would eagerly seize all the worldly advantages compatible with a state which they had not entered of their own free-will. A single fact will suffice to show how difficult it was to root out this abuse: In 1677, the Religious of Paris humbly besought Louis XIV. not to give abbeys to members of their Order. The king heard them favorably, and promised to grant their

* Perhaps it was in favor of the Sister who, contrary to the wishes of her parents, had been excluded from Paray by Margaret Mary, which would strengthen our opinion already expressed, for that lady retired to an abbey after her dismission.

request; and behold, two years after, in 1679, the Religious of St. Denis complain of multiplied secessions, always the consequence of this "pernicious and monstrous ambition."*

Evidently, ordinary means were powerless; it was necessary that Divine Providence should intervene in a most special manner to defend the rampart of holy Religion, in which the world ceased not to make breaches.

We do not mean to say that these abuses were universal and inveterate; I do not think they were; and I am even inclined to believe that, despite these sad dejections, the greater part of these monasteries had not yet ceased to merit the beautiful testimony rendered to the Visitation Order thirty years before, by Henry de Maupas, Bishop of Puy, in his *Life of St. Francis de Sales:*

* We read in the circular of the monastery of Mâcon, dated Feb. 3, 1677: "The obligations we have to our honored Sisters at Paris are ever ancient and ever new. It seems that God is pleased to give them more and more light, in the power and esteem they have acquired by their rare virtues, and most exemplary spirit of religion, for the consolation and support of our dear Institute. The letters our beloved ancients have obtained to prevent his Majesty's giving any more abbeys to our Sisters, is an advantage for which we cannot be ever sufficiently grateful." A circular from St. Denis, Nov. 2, 1679, contains what follows: "The cordial communication of our little news is, in my opinion, one of the most amiable practices of our Institute, all the rules and customs of which are the delights and tendernesses of my heart, which can have no more terrible pain than to see their infraction. I cannot express to you, my most honored Sister, *how much we feel the defections from our Order for abbeys, against which our holy founder and foundress fulminated so many maledictions.*" Even supposing that the complaints uttered in 1679 referred to secessions anterior to 1677, an emotion so profound and so enduring would be no doubtful indication of the gravity of the evil resulting from these lamentable sorties, so injurious to the Institute.

"Unworthy as I am, I have been for twenty-five years in public employments, in which I have had much business to transact with religious orders. I respect and honor them all, and the great saints that have established them. But I confess that the Visitation Order, so far as I could observe its workings, seems to have an indescribable preference of benediction for the exact observance of the most holy rules of charity and humility, which causes—without detriment to the esteem I have for all other holy institutes—my heart to be touched with the pious practices I daily witness among these holy souls."

And indeed, so far as can be judged at this distance from numerous documents, incomplete, it is true, the houses of the Daughters of St. Mary were in general wisely and firmly governed. Now, it is not with Superiors like Mothers Hersaut, Saumaise, and Greyffié of Paray, de Monthoux and de Rabutin at Annecy, Brulard and Boullier at Dijon, de Fountaine and Priolo at Chaillot; it is not, I say, with Superiors of such merit that an Order could suddenly relax. When the authority is in such good hands, sooner or later the rule ends by triumphing over all obstacles.

But there is an essential obligation which I take from the holy Founder himself: "All the ancient Fathers," said he to his dear Daughters, "have laid down that, when unable to practise corporal mortifications, we should apply the more closely to those of the interior: it is necessary, then, that humility toward God and sweetness toward your neighbor should supply in your houses for the austerities of other houses, which you are not called to undertake."

Humility and meekness, the two virtues so dear to the Heart of Jesus, being the foundation of the Visitation, whoever attacks one or the other, shakes the basis of this

pious Institute: the effect truly disastrous, and in a certain sense irreparable, of faults which, elsewhere perhaps, had been more indulgently dealt with. Hence the complaints and the sorrow of the Sacred Heart; hence also the severe reproaches, on account of the forgetfulness of these amiable virtues, addressed to the Daughters of the Visitation, now by the Blessed Virgin, now by the holy Founders. These reproaches, these complaints, Margaret heard in her ecstasies, and she is charged to transmit them to her Sisters, whom Our Lord nearly always styles *His chosen people*, whether He had in view only the monastery of Paray or the whole Order. If He mingled in His warnings some threats, we always feel that His mercy is above His justice, and that He asks only to be appeased, not avenged.

"Once," said the Servant of God, "He presented Himself to me covered with wounds, His Body bleeding, and His Heart torn with sorrow; He seemed as if intensely weary.

"I prostrated myself at His feet with great fear, which was imprinted in me, not daring to speak to Him.

"He said to me: 'Behold the state to which I am reduced by My chosen people, that should have appeased My justice, and that instead persecute me secretly. If they amend not, I will chastise them severely. I will withdraw the just and the innocent, and immolate the rest in My just anger, inflamed against them by their sins.'

"I cannot tell how this made me suffer. I presented to Him His Suffering love, one look of which was capable of appeasing His fury."

* * * * * * *

"One day, as I rose from my bed, I seemed to hear a voice, which said: 'The Lord is tired of waiting: He wishes to enter His granaries to gather His wheat, and separate the good grain from the chaff.'

"And making no account of this, though it remained imprinted on my mind,—striving to turn it away as a distraction which came while I should be praying,—in this interior combat the sanctity of God appeasing itself on me, as though it would annihilate me, rendered me motionless to hear His voice, which said:—

"'My chosen people persecute Me secretly, they have irritated My justice. But I will manifest these secret sins by visible chastisements. For I will riddle them in the sieve of My sanctity to separate them from My elect; and, having separated them, I will surround them with the same sanctity which puts itself between the sinner and mercy. And when My sanctity is once surrounded, it is impossible to recognize it; the conscience is without remorse, the understanding without light, and the heart without contrition: and death in this blindness will be the result.'"

We comprehend sufficiently that these last words were only a threat, and they never became any thing else for the immense majority of monasteries, where, all hearts submitting to the Heart of Jesus, the divine justice was appeased, and placed no more obstacles to the effusions of infinite mercy.

It would seem that the following revelation referred to the community in which Margaret Mary lived:—

"My Lord showed me one day after Holy Communion a rough crown, composed of nineteen piercing thorns, which penetrated His Divine Head, and which caused me such grief that I could speak to Him only by tears and sighs.

"He told me He had come to find me that I might take out these sharp thorns, pressed in by an unfaithful spouse, 'who pierces Me to the brain as many times as through pride she prefers herself to Me,' He continued.

"And not knowing how to draw them out,—for I had this object continually before my eyes, which made me suffer much,—my Superior told me to ask Our Lord what I ought to do to take them out. He answered: 'By so many acts of humility to honor My humiliations.'

"But being proud myself, I besought the Superior to offer to our Lord the practices of humility of the community, which were very, very pleasing to Him; for after the lapse of five days He made known to me that He was relieved of some of His pains, the others remaining yet a long time."

"Another time, being seized with a lively apprehension of going to Holy Communion, lest I should dishonor my Saviour, but not having received permission to remain away I approached with such extraordinary pain that my whole body trembled with apprehension of what my Saviour experienced in some souls who received Him.

"After Holy Communion, He presented Himself to me as in *Ecce Homo*, all torn and disfigured, saying: 'I find no one willing to give Me a place of rest in My suffering, sorrowful state.'

"Death itself had been a thousand times less grievous to me than the sight of my Saviour in so pitiable a condition. He said to me:—

"'If thou didst know who has put Me in this state thy sorrow would be still greater. Five souls consecrated to My service have treated Me thus. For I have been dragged with cords into very narrow places, garnished with sharp points, nails, and thorns, which have wounded Me thus.'

"I felt a great desire to know the explanation of these words, whereupon Our Lord made me understand that the cords were the promise He had made to give Himself to us; the force was His love; the narrow places were

hearts badly disposed; the points were pride. I offered Him the heart He had given me to serve Him for a resting-place in His weariness.

"In his lassitudes He presented Himself to me, when I had any leisure, telling me to kiss His wounds to relieve the pain."

It was not always in this suffering state that Our Lord sought to repose within her. He came also in His glory, particularly one Ascension Day, while she was in choir, before the Blessed Sacrament, occupied in honoring the moment He was raised from earth to heaven. She became suddenly most tranquil, and saw a burning light inclosing the amiable Jesus, who approached her and said: "My daughter, I have chosen thy soul to be a heaven of repose for Me on earth, and thy whole heart shall be a throne of delights for My love." "From that time," says she, "all was calm in my interior, and I feared to disturb the repose of my Saviour."

But most frequently He came to ask consolations, and to invite her to repair the outrages He had suffered in the Sacrament of His love. Thus one Friday, when she had received Him in the Holy Host that had been previously exposed on the altar, He said to her: "My daughter, I come into the heart I have given thee, that by its ardor thou shouldst repair the injuries of tepid, cowardly souls, who dishonor Me in the Holy Sacrament. The soul I have given thee thou shalt offer to God, My Father, to turn away the chastisements these unfaithful souls merit, and by My Spirit thou shalt adore Him with truth, for all these spirits who adore Him only apparently and with dissimulation: and all this for My chosen people. For this end have I given thee so great a gift."

Our Lord one day showed her five hearts separated

from His, and voluntarily depriving themselves of His love; at the same time He said to her:—

"Charge thyself with this burden, and participate in the bitterness of My Heart. Shed tears of sorrow over the insensibility of these hearts that I have chosen to consecrate to My love. Or, rather, leave them to their fate, and come to enjoy My delights."

"But," she says, "leaving these sweetnesses, I gave free course to my tears, feeling myself burdened with these hearts deprived of love, and being free to choose. Understanding that I was invited to enjoy holy love, I often prostrated myself before the Sovereign Bounty, presenting Him these hearts to penetrate them with His love. But suffering alone could achieve that object, and hell is not more horrible than a heart deprived of the love of my Beloved."

What were her sufferings, then, once that, accompanying the most Blessed Sacrament to the room of a sick person, she saw the amiable Jesus turn aside, testifying horror at being brought where they would carry Him. She heard Him say to the priest, "Cease to force Me. I suffer violence."

"Ah!" she exclaims, relating this sorrowful vision, "how I wished that all the assistants had heard this penetrating voice, that they might be moved to weep with me."

This time, too, our Lord deigned to repose in the heart of His Beloved, to solace Himself for the violence He had suffered through love.

Thus did He complain of His chosen people, and, as He clearly gave her to understand, it was pride which commonly repelled Him, nothing being more contrary to the inclinations of His Divine Heart, or more obstructive to the outpourings of His love. He was comforted only

by reposing on the heart of Margaret Mary, meek and humble like His own, and He there found His dearest delights.

The Divine Mother of the Saviour could not fail to interest herself in the honor of her Son; thus she more than once testified to the holy Sister how much her maternal heart was wounded by all that outraged the Heart of Jesus. One day as they sang in choir her beautiful anthem, *Salve Regina*, coming to the words, *Advocata nostra*, she responded: "Yes, my children, I am your Advocate. But I should fill this office with much greater pleasure if you were more faithful to my Son, your Spouse."

Margaret thought that the complaints of the Holy Virgin referred to the fact that many were devoid of the spirit of charity. Gladly would she have given a thousand lives, did she possess them, to see it reign in the community. She had no new light on this subject till the time of the retreat.

On the second day of it, being prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament, to prepare for her confession, she experienced so much pain and confusion at the view of her sins, that she remained weeping for about five or six hours. Then Our Lord appearing to her said:—

"My daughter, wilt thou sacrifice to Me thy tears to wash the feet of My Beloved, sullied in pursuing a stranger?"

"My Lord," she replied, "I have sacrificed all to Thee, not reserving to myself any interest or share in all I do, except the good pleasure of Thy Sacred Heart."

A second time, when she experienced the same profound sorrow at the sight of her sins, He put the same question to her, and told her these tears would be for the soul of His Beloved in sin, but desirous to come out of it. Finally,

He a third time reiterated the same, adding that His Beloved had entered a purgatory to purify her, and that with this assistance nothing could hinder her union with Him.

Some time after, having asked whether she knew who this Beloved was, He deigned to explain that it was the Visitation, which should have but one heart and one soul. The purgatory was solitude or retreat, a means of sanctification offered to the Daughters of St. Mary by His Divine Mother. Those who refused to profit of it were to become like dried up trees, and to receive no more the abundant and victorious graces which make penitents of sinners, and triumph over the most rebellious hearts.

Another vision made Margaret comprehend that the Blessed Virgin was justly desirous of finding great purity and perfection in the lives of her Divine Son's Spouses. She relates it in these terms :—

"On the Feast of her triumphant Assumption, she made me see a crown which she had made of all her holy daughters whom she placed in her train, wishing to appear with this ornament before the Holy Trinity. But she told me sadly, that the flowers with which she was eager to deck her head were too deeply rooted in the earth, and out of fifteen, only five were received as spouses of her Son : making me comprehend how important it is that a religious soul be detached from all and from herself, that her conversation may be in heaven."

The Servant of God had a still more sensible proof of the interest the Most Holy Virgin took in her Order: this was given on the Feast of the Visitation, the patronal Feast of the Daughters of St. Mary, and probably in the year 1685, that is, at a time when the novices had already responded to the calls of the Sacred Heart of

Jesus, and disposed themselves to offer Him in common their first homages.

Prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament, Margaret besought the Divine Goodness to grant some particular favor to her Institute, but her prayer was rejected, and the only answer she received was this: "Do not speak of them to Me; they turn a deaf ear to My voice, and destroy the foundation of the edifice. If they seek to raise it on a strange foundation I will overthrow it."

When the Holy Virgin, coming before her angry Son, accompanied by a multitude of blessed spirits, who prostrated themselves before Him, rendering Him a thousand homages, addressed to Him these words full of tenderness: "Discharge on me Thy just anger. These are the daughters of my heart. I will be to them a mantle of protection, to receive the blows Thou wouldst give them."

Whereupon this Divine Saviour, with a sweet and serene visage, said: "My Mother, thou art all-powerful to bestow My graces as it shall please thee: I am ready for love of thee to bear the abuse they make of them by their contempt of My spirit of humility and simplicity; virtues which should keep the Daughters of the Visitation hidden in Me, their crucified love, while they persecute Me with their spirit of pride, which has broken the bonds of charity, and divided what I united. And if their interests are dearer to thee than Mine, thou mayest arrest the course of My justice."

But this Queen of Mercy, with more than maternal love, replied: "I only ask Thee to delay till the Feast of my Presentation, and in the interim I will spare neither cares nor pains to make Thy graces victorious and ruin the pretensions of Satan, snatching from him the booty he believed already his." At these words the holy Sister, moved with lively gratitude, besought her holy angel to

render his homages to Our Lady. He did so with such eagerness that she saw him at the same moment prostrate at the feet of Mary, and offering to her greatness a thousand thanksgivings and praises. The Mother of fair love was victorious; she had obtained all from her Son.

But the enemy, full of rage to see himself frustrated in all his plans, enveloped the convent church with a violent whirlwind, which seemed as though it would overthrow it. Shamefully driven off by her who had taken in hand the defense of her beloved daughters, twice he tore away the curtains of the grate, and caused to resound in the choir these threatening words: "It is thus I wish to overthrow the Visitation Order, and had done it were it not sustained by this strong column, over which I have no power. But I will do it much injury by the absolute sway several allow me to take in their hearts, and if they continue to side with me I hope for victory."

Shortly after, the Holy Virgin presented herself to Margaret, all weary and fatigued, holding in her sacred hands hearts full of wounds, and saying: "Behold what I have snatched from him who deceived them at his pleasure. But what most afflicts my maternal heart is, that some take part with him against me, and despise the assistance I offer them."

At this period, our dear Sister was more than ever the butt of the enemy's persecutions. The whole community was more than once witness of the good fight she fought against him. Her strange falls about the house and down the stairs were renewed under the eyes of the Sisters, without apparent cause. One day that she was seated in the midst of them, three times did some invisible power take the seat from under her and dash her to the ground. When questioned about this, she smiled and quietly resumed her seat.

For a long time, her blessed Father ceased not to complain to her of the pride, tepidity, and worldly pretensions he saw in many hearts. He had denounced to her, three months before his feast (1675), the excessive complacency towards creatures which had glided into certain monasteries: "I will come on the day of my festival," said he, "to select my true daughters, and I will write them in my heart, to offer them incessantly at the throne of God as an odor of sweetness." On his feast-day he had told her that they should extinguish "those false lights which enlighten us only to precipitate us." And behold, at the epoch at which we have now arrived (1686), he speaks to her of a "strange spirit, full of pride and ambition," which seeks to introduce itself among them, and which tends to nothing less than the ruin, and the irreparable ruin, of the Institute.

O how appropriate were these paternal warnings at this period of the seventeenth century, in which so many communities were entangled in a new heresy, the most contrary that could be to the virtues which made the strength and glory of the daughters of St. Francis de Sales! The first historian of the Servant of God has not despised these; it is in Jansenism that he has seen the enemy from without, full of pride and ambition, whose attacks the Visitation had so much reason to dread. Even then it was making incredible efforts to penetrate the Institute. Already had the monastery of Angus sustained the most terrible assaults, and others were menaced. If defections were few in number and of short duration, the glory of this belongs to the Heart of Jesus. All who were enrolled under this banner were saved. Jansenism instinctively felt that it could never reign where this devotion was established; hence it spared no pains to decry it in the eyes of the faithful, to arrest its

progress; and no one is ignorant with what indignities it unceasingly pursued the memory of the humble virgin whom God had raised up to snatch from it its prey.

Behold, then, according to the Memoirs of the Blessed Margaret, what happened to her on the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, 1686:—

She was prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament, when her blessed Father came to her, accompanied by her worthy Mother, Jane Frances. The holy Father spoke thus: "God has commanded me to visit all the houses of the Institute, all those whom I should acknowledge for my true daughters, before He receives them for His true spouses. And to fulfill this command I have visited the hearts of Superiors, in which those of all the daughters of the Visitation should be inclosed, because, good or bad, they represent the person of Jesus Christ, and all who separate from them are equally separated from Him."

After this, he added: "There is a community which has given me much joy, for I have found only three—and in another five—who are not included in the number of my daughters. But there is one which causes me much grief, where one-third of the members are not now acknowledged by me."

Mother de Chantal then remarked very distinctly that this evil arose from want of simplicity, and that walls detached from their foundations could not long stand. "I feel much pain," said she, "to see a Daughter of the Visitation fail in simplicity; when I was among them, I should have been less grieved to have a knife plunged into my heart. Let each Superior do her utmost to re-establish this dear virtue, and humility. And if amendment do not come soon, God will visit them severely."

Then Blessed Margaret besought the holy Foundress to make known to her the more particular failings. "They are," was the reply, "that faults are mentioned disguisedly; that some seek to justify themselves by accusing others; in a word, they seek their own glory, not the glory of God; thus rendering themselves to the spirit of the demon, who, after having inflated them with the wind of self-esteem, regards them as empty vessels, fit only to amuse him. Curiosity, also, does much damage, since those who curiously inquire into the defects of others, soon become blind with regard to God and themselves." The worthy Mother finished by these words: "True daughters of the Visitation ought to rejoice only in the Cross, and glory only in humiliation, since they can triumph only by the Cross. Let them avoid all pretensions to do more or less than the rule appoints."

Finally, the holy Founder declared to his dear daughter his ardent desire that the Heart of Jesus should be known, loved, and honored, in his whole Institute, remarking that "it was one of the most efficacious means he had obtained, through the medium of the Blessed Virgin, to raise it from its recumbent position, and prevent its succumbing to the artifices of a strange spirit, full of pride and ambition, that seeks to destroy the spirit of simplicity and humility, the true foundations of the whole edifice. In vain Satan strives against this Institute, if it have this Divine Heart for its protector, defender, and support."

I have related at some length these revelations, in which the spirit of God is easily discerned, and which so well mark the true character of the mission confided to Margaret Mary. In the combats which filled an entire century, and caused such ravages in the Church, it is to the humble that victory was promised, and the

Heart of Jesus will always be their fortress and asylum. Woe to those who hear not the pressing and reiterated appeals of which Blessed Margaret is the interpreter! Become the sport of their own minds, the Church will reject them from her bosom, and they shall wither like a branch separated from the trunk whence it derived its sap. The first historian* of our holy Sister, who was, as is well known, one of the most intrepid adversaries of the new heresy, did not understand it otherwise. Having related the words St. Francis de Sales spoke to his dear daughter, he immediately adds: "We see but too clearly to-day the accomplishment of the prophecy made nearly forty years ago. We see to what excesses the spirit of curiosity and the want of simplicity have carried some religious communities. That of Paray profited so well by the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and by the lights bestowed on Sister Margaret, that the nuns who remained in his Institute in that town were eager to regain his good graces, and those of their heavenly Spouse, by following his spirit. This salutary spirit was established by simplicity and obedience; it was established so solidly that in the day of temptation they were not shaken by the spirit of curiosity; and the spirit of rebellion against the Vicar of Jesus Christ was not found among the Sisters of Paray."

* Archbishop Languet.

CHAPTER XXII.

The whole Community render Homage to the Divine Heart.—Letters.—Margaret Mary's Vow.—Father Rollin approves of Margaret Mary's Vow.—Father Croiset, S. J.—Zeal of Sister Lazare.—Memoirs off this Sister.—She brings her Gun to the Monastery.—She fires it off whenever the Nuns expect Robbers.—*This Exercise does not interrupt her Recollection.*—Her extraordinary Memory.—Her Knowledge of the Bible.—Her Fearlessness.

NOTHING had yet announced the approaching triumph of the Heart of Jesus. Our Blessed Sister alone regarded it as certain, confiding in the promise of her Heavenly Spouse, who had said: "Fear nothing; I shall reign in spite of contradiction."

And the storm continued ever to rage without; since the excitement caused by the dismissal of the postulant, a powerful party stormed against her, pursuing her with the most outrageous calumnies, threatening to claim the intervention of the higher Superiors of the Order, and thinking of nothing less than to depose her and cast her into prison.

Within the community more justice was done her; but her zeal, subject to many impediments, was strictly confined to the novitiate. Strange suffering for a soul like hers, to keep in the flame which consumed her—a flame sufficiently hot to inflame the whole world. The bitterness of the Divine Heart, so sensitive to the indifference of persons consecrated to God, flooded the heart of the holy Directress. But she waited in silence till it

should please Our Lord to manifest Himself, placing in Him her whole hope, inaccessible, come what may, to discouragement or impatience. How admirable are the sentiments she expresses in one of her letters to Mother Greyffié :—

"I could not occupy myself with any thing but the Sacred Heart of my Jesus. I should die content if I could procure it some honor, even though this should cost me an eternal punishment. It is enough for me that I love Him and that He reigns. Through the opposition I meet with, I have often been on the point of ceasing to speak on the subject; but the vain fears by which Satan sought to discourage me have been so severely reproved, and afterwards I have been so fortified and encouraged, that I have resolved, cost what it may, to carry out to the utmost what I am allowed at present to do with the Sisters of the novitiate, who are warmly attached to the Devotion. Yet if holy obedience did not permit this I would give it up entirely, because I refer all my views and sentiments to obedience."

It was by the hands of her ancient Superiors, Mothers de Saumaise and Greyffié, that she gathered the first fruits of her zeal for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: touching homage rendered by these worthy Religious to her virtue, which they had so well tried. To the end, they were both her intimate friends; they wrote to her frequently, and had no greater happiness than to receive her letters. Mother de Saumaise at Dijon and Moulins, Mother Greyffié at Semur, where she was six years Superior, labored to propagate the worship of the Divine Heart, even before it was adopted by the community at Paray. What a consolation for our blessed Sister, when she had before her eyes the first pledges of the establishment of this devotion at Semur! Mother Greyffié

sent her pictures for all her novices, and a pretty miniature representing a picture she had ordered to be painted for her altar of the Sacred Heart. This placed beyond doubt that the Divine Heart was known and loved at the monastery of Semur, and reigned over this most fervent community. In the following terms she expresses to Mother Greyffié her joy at this:—

"I expected you would tell me to give up all thoughts of introducing the Devotion of the Sacred Heart, and to think it only a vain chimera of my imagination, and hence I kept my mind submissive, because I give little credence to any thing that comes from myself. But when I saw that dear representation of the only object of our love sent by you, I seemed to begin a new life. I was previously plunged in a sea of sorrow and suffering, and God has changed all my pains into peace, and submission to all the dispositions of His celestial Providence in my regard, so that I feel as if nothing could be capable of troubling me now."

Some days later she wrote to the same:—

"I shall now die content, since the Sacred Heart of my Jesus begins to be known; for it seems to me that by His mercy I am entirely annihilated as to esteem and reputation in the minds of all creatures, which consoles me more than I can express. I remind you of what you promised me on this subject, which is, to hinder as much as you can that any mention be made of me after my death, only to beg prayers for the most wicked and necessitous Religious of the whole Institute, and one who never deserved the honor of being in this community, where the greatest charity is exercised toward me in all manner of ways. I shall never lose the remembrance of it before the Sacred Heart of Jesus, no more than of what I owe you, my very dear Mother."

In her turn, Mother Greyffié, of whom our blessed Sister had asked a new sketch of her picture to send to Mother de Saumaise, wrote to her, May 18:—

"The Adorable Heart of our Divine Master be ever the possessor of yours, my beloved Sister, my dear child! I send the draught you have asked of me, the same as our picture. And I, my friend, thank you for the prayer you have sent me, and for all your kindnesses, of which I am most sensible, because their effects are conformable to my necessities. I need to be regarded with an eye of pity and great mercy; and that the Sacred Heart of our Divine Jesus may be propitious to me, and have compassion on me at the end of my days. But my hope is in Him, and in the protection of His Holy Mother Mary."

At length, the hour of benediction has come. By the secret power of grace, a great change has been wrought in hearts; opposition has ceased, though no one sought to destroy it, and the nuns most opposed to the pious designs of Margaret are suddenly the first to reflect on the community the lights of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In front of the opposers was always found Mary Magdalen des Escures, a venerable Sister, who, according to the testimony of her companions, was a *living rule*. The great love of the rule and traditions of the Institute was doubtless the source of a resistance motived by the most laudable scruples. She deeply loved Margaret, who, on her side, had great confidence in her, and often sought her advice: but she did not the less disapprove of the new devotion. Now, behold, on the last day of the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament, Sister des Escures sought the holy Directress, and, having found her, asked for the picture of the Sacred Heart sent her by Mother Greyffié, which had not yet been out of the novitiate, saying that she thought of nothing less than of exposing

it in the inner choir of the Religious, to be venerated by the entire community. Such a request was not likely to be refused, and next day the first object that arrested the attention of the nuns, on entering the choir, was this blessed image adorned with fair flowers, and placed before the grate on a little altar, or rather bench, neatly covered with a carpet. A note interpreted the sentiments of Sister des Escures, inviting all the spouses of the Lord to do homage to this Divine Heart, and employ themselves to the utmost of their power in propagating the devotion to it and multiplying its adorers.

There were no refusals; all hearts acknowledged the empire of the great Sovereign of hearts, proclaiming, at the same time, that they felt His power by the sudden change operated within them. The same day it was resolved to procure a painting of the Sacred Heart. Soon they decided that this was not enough; that they must dedicate to it an oratory: all with one accord contributed to this; even the boarders gave their pocket-money. But the novices signalized themselves among the rest; it was by the labor of their hands that they testified their love for their Divine Master, especially the Sisters who had charge of the garden, who redoubled their efforts on condition that the profits of their work should be laid out on the projected edifice. With a heart filled with the purest joy, Blessed Margaret assembled her novices and made them recite the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving. "I have nothing more to desire," said she, "since the Sacred Heart of Jesus is known, and begins to reign over all hearts. Act in such a manner, my dearest Sisters, as to make Him reign forever in yours, as your Sovereign and your Spouse."

At that moment, she appeared in all her greatness and in the full maturity of her heroic virtues. From the

heights she had attained, she no doubt raised herself still nearer to her God, accomplishing in her heart these admirable ascensions of which the Psalmist speaks, and mounting always from virtue to virtue; but what eye can follow her flight? Her life is hidden with Christ in God; she no longer lives, it is Christ Jesus who lives in her; her heart beats no more for any creature, for she is dead to all. But fear combats love. By a wonderful scruple she is alarmed at her superhuman insensibility, the fruit and recompense of long combats, and her Director must reassure her in these terms: "It is not a mark of reprobation to experience no movement of joy or sorrow except those the Holy Ghost, who conducts you, imprints on your soul."

This wise decision was communicated to her by Father Rollin, who had been lately removed by his Superiors from Paray: he wrote her a remarkable letter, most eloquent of his piety and discernment of spirits:—

"You will find here, my very dear Sister, answers to the principal questions you have put to me in the course of the year. I write as in the presence of Our Lord, and I will notice your difficulties as they occur to me: I think you will be able to adhere to my instructions to the end of your life. I speak with so much the more assurance, as I am persuaded that it is God who manifests His will to you, though by the most miserable of men: the water that passes through an earthen pipe is as good as that which runs through one of gold.

"1. I have sufficiently seen and known your sufferings at the very time you declared to me the mercies of God in your regard. I know what your disposition is; remain in peace; do not torment yourself with the idea that you are a hypocrite; that you can never be, unless you wish it. I do not perceive that you wish it. Be

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tranquil, therefore, on that point. Practise what you say; let it suffice you to love and suffer in silence. Love the spirit that leads you."

The other counsels turn on the subject of her repugnance to go to the parlor, and to letter-writing; on her mortifications, which she is to regulate by obedience; on vocal prayer, from which she is often called by the attractions of pure love, which lead her in spite of herself to a more sublime prayer; finally, on the persecutions and insults she continues to suffer: "Be pleased in Our Lord when they treat you as a visionary, but give no occasion for it. When you desire to say any thing, say simply: 'Such is my view, perhaps I am deceived.'" She had need of this counsel, for it often happened that she spoke with an assurance which, apart from the supernatural and divine lights that caused it, might lay her open to the charge of presumption.

She consulted him concerning a vow, the object of which was, to engage her always to do what she believed to be most perfect. It was found among her papers after her death, written with her own hand:—

"This is the vow I felt urged to make for so long a time, but which I would only make with the advice of my Director and Superior, who, after having examined it, permitted me to do so, on condition that if it should ever cause me any trouble or scruple, I should be released from it, and that I should cease to be bound by such articles of it as might give me pain. This vow is only to unite me more closely to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to engage myself indispensably to do whatever He makes known to me as His wish. But alas, I feel within me so much inconstancy and weakness, that I should not dare to make any promise except in reliance on the goodness, mercy, and charity of the amiable Heart

of Jesus Christ, for whose love I make this vow, without wishing that it should trouble or constrain me, but render me more faithful to my Sovereign Master, who has made me hope that He will render me more attentive to its practice, which does not engage me under pain of sin, inasmuch as I may fail through forgetfulness, &c.: not designing to make it matter of offence toward my God, but a means of loving Him more ardently and purely, by crucifying the flesh and the senses, which may His grace enable me to do. Amen."

On this subject, Father Rollin had written to her as follows:—

"I approve of your making the vow you mentioned; you shall do so at the end of the retreat you design to make at the earliest opportunity; but with this condition, that if at any future time this vow causes you uneasiness, it will no longer exist, and you will be entirely free from it; and also that your confessors shall have all power over it, either to explain it when doubts arise, or even to dispense you from it altogether if they judge this to be expedient for the glory of God."

Some articles of this vow show the prodigious abnegation of Margaret:

"I will suffer in silence, without uttering a complaint, whatever may befall me. I will avoid no suffering or pain, either of mind or body, humiliation, contempt, or contradiction. (Art. iv.)

"I will seek no other relief than that which I judge to be absolutely necessary; and when Providence presents me with any comforts I will accept them simply, renouncing any pleasure I may find in them, or that nature may take in satisfying its necessities or otherwise, thinking only of loving my Spouse and pleasing Him. (Art. v.)

"I will neither do any thing, nor leave any thing undone, through human respect or vain complacency toward creatures. And, as I have asked Our Lord to let nothing of His extraordinary graces appear in me unless what may draw upon me contempt, confusion, and humiliations before creatures; so I shall deem it a great happiness when whatever I say or do shall be despised, censured, or blamed; endeavoring to bear all for the love and glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in conformity to His sacred intentions, to which I unite myself in all things. (Art. xv.)

"I will grant to nature only what I cannot legitimately refuse it without becoming singular, which I am always anxious to avoid. In short, I wish to live without self-will, to keep nothing, and to say in every event: *Fiat voluntas Tua.*" (Art. xviii.)

As she prepared herself for this great act of humiliation, the Feast of St. Francis Assisi being come, this saint was given her for her guide and protector. She saw him shining with inexplicable light, and, as it seemed to her, more eminent in glory than other saints, because of his conformity with Jesus suffering, and his love for the Holy Passion. She comprehended that this great saint, by the sacred stigmata of Our Saviour, was closely united to His Divine Heart, and had a special power to obtain grace from it, and to obtain mercy for sinners, and especially for Religious who had grown remiss in the observance of their rule.

On the Vigil of All Saints (Oct. 31, 1686), she offered to God this admirable vow, the last pledge of her love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The first article, which includes all the others, ends thus: "O my only Love, I will endeavor to subject all that is within me to Thee, by doing whatever I believe to be the most perfect, or the

most conducive to the glory of Thy Sacred Heart, to which I promise to spare nothing in my power, and not to refuse to do or to suffer any thing in order that it may be known, loved, and glorified. Amen."

But as she proceeded to make it, considering the great number of points included in it (there were eighteen), she was seized with fear, and dared not to utter it. But Our Lord came to her succor, speaking in the depths of her heart these words: "The unity of My love will supply the place of attention in the multiplicity of these things; be assured that this love will repair all the faults thou shalt commit against this vow, by exciting thee to expiate them by mortifications and austerities." Having received this consoling assurance, she no longer hesitated, but joyfully made this heroic sacrifice.

What meant these words: "The unity of My love will hold the place of attention in the multiplicity of these things?" This has been well explained by a pious author thoroughly versed in interior ways, Father Croiset, S. J., who says: "We may see by this vow what grace can effect in a heart inflamed with the pure love of Jesus Christ. An engagement so universal as this, which extends to the least actions and thoughts, would appear to include something very troublesome, or rather difficult; and so it would, in fact, if the same Spirit that inspired it had not, at the same time, taught her a sure and easy means to practise it without scruple and without uneasiness. This means was no other than the pure and perfect love of God continually exercised. 'Whatever obligation thy vow imposes,' said this amiable Saviour, 'to think always of so many things, know that thou shalt satisfy all by loving Me unreservedly and uninterruptedly. Think and labor only to love Me perfectly; think only of loving Me, and, by consequence, of pleasing Me on

every occasion and in all things. Let My love be the end and object of all thy thoughts, of all thy actions, of all thy desires. Breathe only My love, and apply thyself always only to love Me more and more. I assure thee that, without troubling thyself further, thou shalt do more by this exercise than thou hast promised by thy vow.'"

Thus spoke Father Croiset, who had learned of Blessed Margaret herself the secrets of the Heart of Jesus. She never repented of her vow, and she found effectually in the unity of love, inexhaustible resources to fulfil engagements so varied. In recompense of it, Our Lord granted her the only joy she desired, namely, to witness the triumph of His Divine Heart in the blessed monastery of Paray. The following year, when she quitted the office of Directress, the young Religious formed under her guidance desired to have some dear souvenir of the novitiate: now, she was accustomed to confide to them a little image, which they passed from one to another, that each in turn might testify her tenderness for the Divine Heart, of which she beheld the dear picture. This they placed in a gallery, where they continued to venerate it, and, later on, this gallery became a pious oratory of the Sacred Heart.

Meanwhile the whole community labored to prepare for this Adorable Heart a sanctuary and altar worthy of it: a new edifice was soon raised within the inclosure, and all sought to rival each other in zeal for adorning and embellishing it. How can I avoid naming here Sister Lazare Dusson, the good gardener, whose labors God blessed, and who consecrated to the Heart of Jesus the fruit of her sweat? If she who poured her perfumes on the adorable Head of the Saviour in the cenacle of Bethania will live in the memory of man wherever the Gospel shall be preached, it would seem that Sister Lazare merits

here a similar glory. I will not separate her name from that of Margaret Mary Alacoque.

One day when the Life of St. Catharine of Sienna was read in the refectory, she could not hinder herself from saying, as if to herself: "Oh! if I could see a person like her, how happy I should be!" She had scarcely spoken when she heard Our Lord say within her: "See, here is My beloved, to whom I have not granted less favors and graces." Opening her eyes, she perceived before her our dear Margaret, and could not doubt that what she had heard was truly the testimony of the Holy Ghost. Thenceforth she sought the friendship of this lover of the Heart of Jesus, and seized every occasion of speaking to her, which could be the more easily done as Sister Margaret often shared the labors of the lay Sisters. "Our dear Lazare," says our Memoir, "profited well of the advantage she often enjoyed of conversing with this seraph on earth. She seconded her as much as possible in her holy enterprise of establishing the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the novitiate. She was most assiduous to venerate it, and united with our venerable Sister des Escures to uphold this worship and render it solemn among us. She was quite transported at the mere mention of this adorable Heart, and inspired love for it whenever she spoke of its divine excellencies." Finally, her request could not be refused, when she asked leave to say once aloud at recreation, "Live the Sacred Heart of Jesus," which she did in a tone and attitude that touched us all to the depths of our hearts.*

* *Abridgment of the Life and Virtues of our dear Sister Lazare Dusson, who died in this Monastery of Paray, Aug.* 20, 1744, *aged* 87 *years, professed* 67, *of the rank of domestic Sisters.*—MS. Archives of Paray-le-Monial. There are found in this notice several traits of piquant originality, not bad illustrations of the manners of that epoch. Sister Dus-

The chapel was at length finished, adorned with all the pomp and sweet magnificence ingenious piety could devise. Its dedication was fixed for September 7, 1688, on which day the gates of the monastery were opened to receive the clergy of the town, who came in procession, followed by a great number of the faithful, to whom it was impossible to refuse admission. The ceremonies lasted two hours, and when they were over, the crowd, which was considerable, retired in a most edifying manner.

All this time Blessed Margaret passed in the chapel,

son was a native of the neighboring village of Couches, some leagues from Autun, a district partially Protestant, and she became, in consequence of this last circumstance, very well instructed in her faith, and had even some knowledge of controversy. "In learning to read at the house of some pious maidens, she learned also to pray, which she did in an easy, cordial manner, without method, without scruple, having a just, sensible, and very strong mind. She was a very decided person and had a sure, easy air in all she did. She even went, without ceremony, to the chase with her brothers, while yet a secular, and could manage a gun so well that we afterwards regarded her as a great safeguard; she kept her gun, and fired it off in our inclosure whenever we apprehended robbers; *this exercise, not being very ordinary with her, did not interrupt her spiritual practices.* Her zeal for the Catholic faith made her deplore the misfortune of those who obstinately separated from it. She incessantly besought Our Lord to bring them back to the centre of unity, to the religion so dear to her heart. She was very learned, and though she had never read the Bible but once, her memory was so fine that she hardly forgot a passage of it. She drew up questions which the most clever doctors liked to answer, always causing them to be proposed by a third person. Every day she told us at recreation some little Gospel story, or recited some hymn of the Church, for she knew all the Church anthems by heart, in beautiful verse; she had a special relish for these verses, saying them in bed whenever she could not sleep. She was a very generous soul, brave and fearless of all things when the dear interests of God were at stake. So courageous was she that she would have defied a tyrant."

where she was seen in prayer, immovable as a statue. Several persons sought to speak with her for a moment, but, observing her profound devotion, they withdrew without daring to disturb her holy repose; and God alone could appreciate what passed within our Blessed Sister during these most joyous hours of amorous ecstasy and ineffable thanksgivings.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Margaret Mary's Intercourse with the Houses of her Order.—Louise Henriette de Soudeilles.—Her Novitiate.—Her Employments in the Convent.—She entertains the Duchess de Longueville.—She receives Visits from Catharine of Bra4anza, Mary of Modena, James II.—Extract from a Letter of Madame de Sévigné.—Félicia Madeleine de La Barge.—Letters.—Moulins.—Sister de Thélis.—Dorothea Desbarres.—Madeleine Joly composes in French a Mass and Office in Honor of the Sacred Heart.—Father Charolais translates them into Latin.—She paints a Picture of the Sacred Heart.—Circular Letter from Dijon.—The Students of the College of Lyons.—Father Croiset's Book.—Disciples of the Sacred Heart.

To RENOUNCE the silence and oblivion of creatures, in which she earnestly desired to bury herself forever, was, for the humility of our dear Sister, the greatest of sacrifices. Yet it was the will of God that this pure torch should shed its beams not only in the narrow cloister of a monastery, but far beyond it, to conquer all hearts to the Heart of Jesus. Hence she had received an order never to refuse to appear in the parlor or to write letters, when obedience or charity required it; and it was even at this price, as will be remembered, that she had obtained for the young Sister de Senécé the grace of being fortified at the hour of death with all the sacraments of the holy Church. Besides, how could she resist the pressing advances made toward her on all sides? It was not so easy for her to cause herself to be forgotten: never could Mother de Saumaise, for example, forget her, or be

satisfied with her silence. It appears that she was the first to complain of it, after her return to Dijon, perhaps even with some vivacity, for we find our Blessed Margaret offering her friendly explanations and humble excuses: "It was not without mortification to myself," she writes, "and certainly not from want of affection, that I deprived myself of the sweet consolation of writing to you, to say that I should always set the same value on your charity. You know well that our good Master has so closely united my heart to yours that I do not fear they will ever be separated; and, as I have no words to express the gratitude I feel for your maternal goodness, it must suffice to tell you that I shall ever preserve the remembrance of it before Our Lord; whom I pray to impart to you His most precious graces and loving caresses in that delightful solitude, the sweets of which I share with you." Here she alludes to the favors, that is, the crosses she then endured. "I can express but imperfectly those with which He now honors me, by saying that they appear to me a cross both to soul and body, without my being able to complain or desire consolation, other than that of never receiving any in this world, and living entirely hidden in Jesus crucified, unknown in my sufferings, that no creature may compassionate or remember me, if not to increase my pains." The following year Mother de Saumaise was elected Superior of Moulins, the monastery that witnessed the happy departure of the holy Foundress; there her heart is still preserved, and the entire community is yet embalmed with the remembrance and the good odor of her virtues.

Must it not have been on that occasion that the following letter was addressed by Margaret Mary to the new Superior? "I confess, my dearest Mother, that I was extremely delighted to learn the pleasure you have given

Our Lord by embracing His Cross with joy and submission. It is true that He has covered it with roses lest you should dread it, but that, far from being a subject of rejoicing for you, should make you long to feel the pricks of the thorns which are hidden beneath; because then it is that Our Lord will take delight in you by rendering you conformable to Himself, and showing you that He is no less amiable in the sufferings of Calvary than in the joys of Thabor."

Mother de Saumaise made no secret of her sentiments with regard to her dear daughter at Paray; others soon imbibed them. Several Religious of Moulins urged her to solicit a union of prayers, and beg that Margaret would remember them before God. At the head of these was Sister Louise Henriette de Soudeilles, to whom our dear Margaret replied in September, 1679: "I beseech the Sacred Heart of Jesus to consume ours in the ardors of His holy love, which, I believe, has procured the honor of your acquaintance for a person whose great miseries urge her incessantly to remain unknown and forgotten by all creatures in this world."

The union of these two hearts soon became very intimate, and the more so, as Sister de Soudeilles spared nothing to unite them still more closely. Her holy friend wrote to her in the following year thus: "I believe you no longer think of me, who do not forget you before Our Lord—in whom I would willingly complain that you daily come from such a distance to visit me between the two elevations of the Mass. You are often present to my mind, and when we have said to our Divine Master what you desire, you go away gently, telling me, as in your dear letter, that you will not fatigue me. But how could I contend with you, my dearly loved Sister, since you know so well how to gain hearts, that if

I were not sure it is to restore them to God, verily I should beseech Him to defend me from you."

Sister de Soudeilles was well fitted to comprehend Margaret Mary's views, for she had a tender devotion to the Incarnate Word, and consecrated each day of the week to honor some of His perfections. At the early age of eleven, she had pledged her faith to the celestial Spouse, making a vow of chastity the very day of her first Communion. She at first desired to consecrate herself to God with the Ursulines of Limoges, by whom she had been educated; but the Duchess of Montmorency having told M. de Soudeilles that she wished to have with her one of his dear daughters, this good gentleman, full of honor and merit, could not easily refuse this new token of attachment to the widow of a prince whom he had faithfully served through evil report and good. Louise Henriette, the eldest of his daughters, was therefore sent to Moulins to the Visitation. She there received the habit, February 12, 1645. The courage she displayed in her novitiate presaged an uncommon virtue. Despite the benefactions of Madame de Montmorency, this house was very poor, and the food of the Sisters very mean and coarse. With her delicate constitution, Louise was not proof against such regimen, and she soon became seriously indisposed in consequence; but she concealed her sufferings, lest she should be dispensed from any of the common observances. Even in the eyes of the world, she was distinguished among her Sisters as being full of mind, of tact, of appropriateness for her position. Thus, when the Duchess de Longueville came to visit her aunt at the Visitation of Moulins, where she spent nearly a year, Madame de Montmorency wished that Sister Louise Henriette should be always among the number of the Religious who entertained her, and it was remarked that

this princess preferred her to all the others. In the offices of Mistress of the Boarders, Directress of the Novices, and Superior, which she successively filled, she had opportunities of meeting with some of the first families of France, the Montmorency and the Condé being alternately attracted to this community by the presence, or the venerated memory, of the illustrious widow their relative, Mary Felicia des Ursins.

Mother de Soudeilles received there a visit from the Queen Dowager of England, Catharine of Braganza, when she traveled through France to Portugal; and, later on, several visits from King James II. and Mary Beatrice, his Queen.* She counted among her pupils and novices ladies of high rank, among others, Henriette de Ventadour and Virginia de Valençay.† But far from allowing herself to be ever dazzled by the splendor of name and fortune, far from being influenced by so much grandeur, she applied herself constantly to form true lovers of the Cross, meek and humble daughters of the Heart of Jesus; she esteemed very highly our Blessed Margaret, who wrote to her, July 7, 1682, as follows:

* This visit of the king and queen of England took place in 1701. During the three days their Majesties spent at Moulins, the queen came four times to the Visitation, where she conversed for a long time with the very worthy Sister Louise Henriette. It is probable that Blessed Margaret was not forgotten, for in the year 1697, this pious princess, who had had for Director Father de la Colombière, solicited the Holy See to institute the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

† "Tell me about the wonders of the tomb of M de Montmorency, and of the beauty of the Mademoiselles de Valençay." Madame de Sévigné wrote thus to her daughter, February 16, 1671, in answer to a letter of Madame de Grignan, who had stopped at Dijon on her way to Provence. By this we see that the Ladies de Valençay, in giving themselves to God, had sacrificed something besides riches. Like Mademoiselle Henriette de Ventadour, they belonged by maternal blood to the house of Montmorency.

"You was right to be fearful of deciding the vocations of young ladies, for in truth it is a difficult thing to do, unless the Lord Himself makes it known, and it is very dangerous to be deceived in this matter. But it is necessary to leave Him to act in those who present themselves, without contributing any thing on our part, only what may be necessary regarding His glory, without troubling ourselves as to difficulties. For when it is a true call from God, He knows well how to enable them to surmount all obstacles, if they pray fervently to Him. It seems to me that when we look only to God, and seek but His glory, we have nothing to fear, since He regards only the good-will of a heart that loves Him truly."

Among the dear friends and faithful imitators of our Blessed Sister in the monastery of Moulins, I distinguish also Félicia Madeleine de la Barge, who became Directress when Louise Henriette de Soudeilles became Superioress. Daughter to the lady of honor of the Duchess of Montmorency, she was but five years old when that princess, having taken leave of her whole house, brought her into the cloister, where she was educated under her own care. She was then so indolent and self-willed, that it was feared she would never be able to submit to the rule; but Mother de Chantal, having conversed with her for some time, assured her friends that the child would become a Religious, and a good Religious, a prediction which was fully verified. Being very susceptible of particular attachments, this was the principal obstacle she had to vanquish to satisfy the desires of her heavenly Spouse. Consequently, Blessed Margaret Mary ceased not to exhort her to renunciation, annihilation, and forgetfulness of herself and creatures. "Forget yourself," said she, "and He will think of you. Abyss yourself in

your own nothingness, and you will possess Him. He desires that you should learn to live *without support*, *without friends*, *without pleasure*. According as you shall occupy yourself with these words, He will teach you their meaning. Once more, my dear friend, do not trouble yourself about your faults, but when you shall have committed any, say confidently to the most amiable Heart of Jesus: 'O, my only Love, satisfy for Thy poor slave, and repair the evil I have just done. Make it conduce to Thy glory, to the edification of my neighbor and the salvation of my soul.' And in this way our faults will sometimes serve to humble us, and show us what we are, and how useful it is to us to conceal ourselves in the abyss of our nothingness. But self-love, wishing to reign every where, to be applauded, loved, and welcomed, neither desires to hear nor understand this lesson. But we must not reason with it, because it feeds and increases on reflections and arguments."

Sister de la Barge profited by the counsels of Margaret, and God was pleased to reward her fidelity by special favors, several of which were granted to her on the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, whom she honored with a special devotion. On this occasion, while she was reciting Vespers with the community, she suddenly became as it were absorbed; it seemed to her that Our Lord and His Blessed Mother gave her this beloved disciple for her master and guide in the spiritual life, that He might conduct her to the bosom of the Divinity by the Heart of Jesus, which she had chosen as the place of her repose and retreat, and also, as she herself expressed it, as her tomb. Hence, from this time her life was but a death, a continual annihilation, till her happy decease (Nov. 26, 1690), which followed close upon that of her holy and illustrious friend of Paray.

About the same time, Blessed Margaret was consulted by Mademoiselle de Chamberlain, of Moulins, one of those souls that aspire to great perfection, and form projects to attain it, but whose intentions and views are not yet sufficiently upright and pure. We shall see what a holy liberty, a noble and generous frankness, reigns in the reply of the humble maid of Paray, who writes as follows:—

"You desire me to give you my opinion on the choice of your vocation; I can only tell you to follow the counsel of him who directs you. You tell me he does not know you, which greatly surprises me, because we should make the truth of our good desires known rather by works than by words; the latter are suspicious where the conduct does not exemplify them, to some extent at least.

"Think well of this; where vows are concerned, salvation is concerned, inasmuch as they give a new merit to our actions. I will speak frankly to you: I cannot reconcile these two things together, that a soul should wish to belong entirely to God, and yet frequently and voluntarily fail in sincerity, seeking certain windings and concealments in its words and actions; not going the straight way of those who seek God alone in all they do, and without any artifice take for their device: 'I will do neither more nor less when alone than when in sight of creatures, since my God sees me everywhere, and penetrates the most secret folds of my heart.'"

She concludes thus: "I know not why God has permitted me to speak to you of the holy virtue of simplicity, unless it be that He seems to me to have so much horror of the contrary vice that, if I should discover in a soul all the other virtues, without that of sincerity, to me they would all appear but deceit and illusion. But I have

been diffuse enough on this subject; follow in all things what your good Director orders you, because he desires your true advancement, for the glory of God."

The apostolate of our Blessed Sister among the Religious of Moulins was crowned with the happiest fruits: Mother de Soudeilles signalized herself by her eagerness to establish in her community the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She had received from her holy friend two images of this Divine Heart; the smaller one she kept for herself, always wearing it next her heart; the larger was exposed, for the veneration of the Sisters, in the room in which the holy Foundress died. Henceforth, this pious oratory was more frequented than ever; on the first Friday of every month, the Superior brought thither the whole community, to make the act of reparation. At the same time, a chapel was being erected in the monastery church, which was scarcely finished when God called home this beautiful soul. She died in great sentiments of humility, saying: "I have destroyed by my actions what I built up by my words. If you knew how I have dishonored the Order! My God, pardon me and have mercy on me!" She then took the heart of St. Jane Frances, and laid it on her own, making this prayer: "My holy Mother, offer to the Divine Heart of Jesus the ardors of yours, to supply for the coldness of mine!"

But the letters most eloquent of Margaret's force of mind are those she addressed to Sister de Thélis, a professed nun of the monastery of Lyons, a generous soul, who passed through extraordinary trials, and was for a long time the object of calumnies, which ultimately served but to make her virtue shine the more resplendently. At first, she resisted; but the exhortation of our dear Margaret became more pressing, as may be seen by

the following letter of September, 1687, sent to Sister de Thélis during her autumn retreat:—

"In all that your charity tells us, we see the force of Divine grace, which pursues you through so many relapses; this delights me, because it shows the ardent desire God has to save your soul, which, however, He will not do without your co-operation. Hence, we must not flatter ourselves, for, if we think of always resisting Him, He may cease to pursue us, withdrawing quietly from us while we remain insensible to our loss. Therefore, *if to-day you shall hear His voice, harden not your heart;* strive to profit of the holy retreat you are about to make, by a strong and efficacious will to vanquish yourself, to do yourself continual violence, whether to detach you from self, or from other stumbling-blocks which are not unknown to you. But there must be no more voluntary faults if you desire to re-enter the good graces of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise, it is in vain that you seek them, for He sports with us as we sport with His graces. May His goodness defend us from this misfortune, which is greater than can be explained; for what happiness can a soul have that has lost her God?"

After the retreat of Sister de Thélis, our venerable Margaret returns to the charge: "It is true, my honored Sister, that if the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ had given me less affection for your dear soul, I should not feel myself so sensibly touched when I see it retarded in the way of perfection. Since you engage me to tell you freely my thoughts, I will do so simply, for I abhor flattery and dissimulation. You know that there is no medium, and that there is question of losing or saving yourself for eternity; all depends on your own choice: you may love God eternally in Heaven with the Blessed,

having done violence to self by crucifying self here below, as they did, or renounce their happiness for sake of gratifying nature. Why so many arguments and disputes to observe resolutions which seem so useful to your perfection, that, without reducing them to practice, you cannot make great progress? It is because they weary and constrain nature, you say. Then should you practise them the more faithfully, for nature and grace cannot at the same time sway the same heart. One must always give place to the other. And what use to make resolutions in retreat, my dear Sister, if we afterward fail to practise them? Is not this to write our own condemnation, which shall be shown us on the day of judgment, when it will be said: Here is what she wrote, and behold what she has done!"

She redoubles her warnings in her next letter:

"Go, then, to God courageously, by the way He has traced for you, ever faithful in embracing the means He presents to you. Rough as these may appear to nature, do not change them for crosses of your own selection. Rest in God with entire confidence in His goodness. He never abandons those who hope in Him and diffide in themselves. Do not leave unfinished the good you have commenced, unless by order of those who direct you. But you know enough on this subject; let us but strive, my dearly loved Sister, to practise diligently what we know so well."

We will not delay on the intercourse, always so intimate and so affectionate, that our Blessed Sister kept up with Mother Greyffié when the latter became Superior of Semur, in Auxois. It is there, perhaps, that the lover of the Heart of Jesus gathered the sweetest fruits of her zeal, as though Mother Greyffié had willed to make amends for the trials which she formerly inflicted

on her. But no; in the eyes of both, these trials were true benedictions, and nothing contributed more to cement between them a strong and holy affection, over which neither time nor absence had any power. The same may be said with regard to Mother de Saumaise. It is a beautiful testimony to the Servant of God to see her ancient Superiors become her faithful helpers, and spreading around them the sentiments of love and veneration, with which they were penetrated for her.

Recalled to Dijon in the course of the year 1682, Mother de Saumaise there pursued the propaganda of Divine love she had so happily commenced at Moulins. There she found Magdalen Joly, an inflamed soul, a true imitator of the great Gospel lover whose name she bore. Yes, she too loved much. With Mother de Saumaise, she bore during many years all sorts of trials and rebuffs, to prepare in the monastery of Dijon for the reign and the triumph of the Heart of Jesus. From afar Margaret Mary had encouraged them, assuring them that this triumph was certain, and even near. Indeed, their highest hopes were realized, in an admirable and unexpected manner, under the government of Mother Dorothy Desbarres. This Mother was herself a great soul, a worthy pupil of Seraphine Boullier, whose writings she collected, and whose life she retraced in pages full of unction and charm. She is the first to second the pious enterprises. Behold how love is industrious, as it is knowing, clever, and holily audacious! Magdalen Joly, a simple cloistered girl, composes sweet litanies, an office, a mass in honor of the Adorable Heart of Jesus; all in French, to be sure, for she knows no other tongue; but what matter? the Latin will come afterwards, and in fact a good priest, M. Charolais, Spiritual Father of the monastery, happy to contribute to the glory of the Divine Heart, translates the mass and

office into real liturgical Latin, and the approbation of the Diocesan is obtained! The first Friday of February, 1689, M. Bouhier, Superior of the house, came to the Visitation to celebrate this Mass of the Sacred Heart; and after Easter, the Canons of the Holy Chapel came processionally to the Church of the Visitation Monastery, where they sang the Mass in Gregorian chant.*

Magdalen Joly made another use of the new talents which she owed to her great love. Without having ever learned drawing, she sketched a picture of the Sacred Heart, and the artist to whom the execution of it was confided, acknowledged that he could do nothing better than adopt her whole design. "This picture," say the Annals, "was brought us during retreat, and was afterwards exposed every Friday. We then commenced to render public homage to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in

* Some days after, the community of Dijon wrote to the other houses: "We are urged and animated to solid virtue by the intimate graces our community receives from the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is not new to holy souls, who regard it as the centre of unity and the source of all ardor. But we believe it new as to the institution of the Feast and the permission to celebrate the Mass of it, which we have obtained from our illustrious prelate, who approves our piety, and permits the devotion to be spread through his diocese. Already several of our houses wish to participate in our favor, and have asked us for a copy of the Mass composed in honor of the Sacred Heart; it may be had in a little book now for sale, which contains also the motives of this Devotion, besides some fervent prayers and litanies. If any of you, dear Sisters, should wish for it, we shall always be disposed to oblige you, for we believe nothing is introduced contrary to our holy maxims which forbid multiplicity, since this devotion produces a different effect, recalling us to the interior life, and not by any means overburdening us with vocal prayers."—[*Circular Letter from Dijon, April* 11, 1689.

We may observe in passing, that the above is an excellent answer to all the opposition Margaret met with in the name of the Constitutions of St. Francis.

our house by canticles of love and gratitude, and our Sisters left the oratory of the Sacred Heart only for the community exercises." Finally, in 1692, a chapel of the Sacred Heart was erected in the church of the monastery. The city of Dijon became a great focus of this Devotion, and toward the middle of this century the whole diocese was consecrated by its bishop to the Divine Heart, as is attested by a splendid marble monument in the cathedral. Among the Religious of Dijon who signalized themselves by their zeal, Mother Brulard must not be forgotten: when superior of Perigneux, she became in this district the messenger and evangelist of the Amiable Heart of Jesus.

Delighted with all she heard from Dijon, Semur, Moulins, and other places in which the Heart of Jesus began to be known and loved, the more Margaret saw it reign, the more she humbled and confounded herself, not ceasing to exhort her holy friends and generous colleagues to enter with her into the way of absolute renunciation and abnegation.

"Be sure," wrote she to Magdalen Joly, "be sure, my dear Sister, to regard it as a great happiness to be employed in this holy work! Fear not to forget yourself for this object, since that is the very disposition He requires of those whom He employs. He is careful, at the same time, not to forget you, for His love looks upon you with delight, and is occupied in purifying and sanctifying you, that you may be perfectly united to Him while you are employed in glorifying Him. He is pleased at your endeavors, because He loves you; but if you could understand in what manner He loves you, you would place no

* *Annals of the Monastery of Dijon*, published by M. L'Abbé Colet, V. G., Dijon.

limit to your exertions that you might offer Him some little return!"

About the same time, she had a revelation of the recompenses to be granted to those who employ themselves in this blessed work:—

"These are such immense treasures," wrote she to Mother de Saumaise, "that it is impossible for me to explain them, though I will tell you that you and your whole community will share largely in them, especially your honored Mother, and, above all, your confessor and yourself; for when, in receiving Holy Communion, I acquitted myself of the commission you gave me to offer you three to this Amiable Heart, it seemed to me that I distinctly heard these words: 'Yes, I receive them forever to the friendship of My Heart.' This imprinted in my soul sentiments so full of sweetness that I remained transported with joy, at the thought that my dear Mother was of the number of His cherished favorites and friends.

"Another time, as He conversed with His little slave, He told her that He had made a crown of twelve of His friends who procured him the greatest glory here below; that they should be like twelve stars around the Sacred Heart. It seemed to me that you three were of this blessed number. I cannot go on, for I perceive I have some share in what I say, and I feel plunged in such great confusion, and suffer such a painful martyrdom, that often I have not courage to proceed. Hence, my dear Mother, I invite you to follow up the work of Our Lord, and not to grow weary, since He accepts your services. The greatest recompense is that of pleasing Him."

Mother de Saumaise progressed, she flew, in the work of the Lord, and each letter of our blessed Sister reveals to us some new progress. At first, obscure and hidden,

crouching, so to say, in the shadow of the cloister, it eventually breaks forth and displays itself in all its luster: it is an image of the Christian religion coming out of the cenacle, when the first faithful would felicitate themselves on seeing now a simple artisan, now a rich merchant, fall into the evangelical nets: it is the leaven of the parable which a skilful woman worked into the meal till the whole was fermented; or rather, the spark falling on the reeds dried by the heats of a scorching sun: *tanquam scintillæ in arundineto;* the flame spreads from one to another, devouring all it touches, and silvering the plain beneath the most distant horizon.

See, for example, what passed at Lyons, owing to Madeleine Joly's little book. It fell into the hands of the young scholars who frequented the Jesuits' College at Lyons, and, their hearts burning within them as they read it, they lent it from one to another, and, possessing but one copy, they transcribed it in their best writing. An humble artisan, young like themselves, thinks it would be pleasing to God to get it printed, and offers to defray the whole expense of the edition. But the printer is jealous of having his share in the enterprise, and a touching combat of zeal and generosity takes place between them. The book appears, enriched with some fervid and pious pages from Father Croiset; it is immediately reprinted in many cities: these editions, ever and anon increased, bear to every extremity of France the knowledge and love of the Heart of Jesus Christ.

Decidedly, the hour marked by Providence had sounded; hearts responded on all sides to this appeal, which came to them they knew not whence, for our dear Sister is still shrouded in profound obscurity; and it is only after her death that Father Croiset shall dare for the first

time to raise with reverend hand the veil which hid from all eyes her heroic life and her admirable virtues.

She said that devotion to the Sacred Heart would insinuate itself like oil, like a precious balm, full of sweetness. She would not force it; she warned her colleagues against every species of human impetuosity. It was the little, the ignorant, the poor, that contributed most largely to his triumph of divine love. Once, indeed, at the suggestion of her confessor, she turned toward Louis XIV., thinking that he would, perhaps, acknowledge the empire of the Heart of Jesus, and consecrate to it his kingdom: but no; humility was essential to the comprehension of such a magnificently great and Christian idea. Yet she declared that the loving Heart of Jesus would be the protector of our country. "No less powerful means," said she, "could turn away the severity of God's just anger. And," she added, "I hope that this Divine Heart will be to my country a source of mercies."

These glorious hopes would receive one day their fulfilment, but *that day* she well knew that she would never live to see. What matter to the humble lover of the Heart of Jesus, provided that this Amiable Heart be glorified? For her, it was enough to love and to suffer, thereby to render herself conformable to her Beloved. Thus she writes to Mother de Saumaise:—

"Pursue courageously what you have undertaken for His glory and the establishment of His reign. This Sacred Heart will reign in spite of Satan and his emissaries. But now is the time to work and suffer in silence, as He has done for love of us."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Margaret Mary in the Parlor.—She is visited by Fathers Villette and Croiset.—She experiences much Delight in entertaining them.—At first they are disappointed in her.—She improves on Acquaintance.—Hospitals of St. Joseph and St. Louis.—Mademoiselle de Lionne.—Her Birth and Parentage.—She is directed by Father de la Colombière.—Her Repugnance to the Religious State.—Singular Incident.—A Ghost frightens away her Beauty.—She goes to Lyons to consult Father de La Colombière.—She becomes a Religious.—Surprise of her Friends.—The Lioness becomes a Lamb.—Her Friendship for Margaret Mary.

While remaining unknown to many persons who ranged themselves under the banner of the Heart of Jesus, our Blessed Margaret saw her dear obscurity dissipated by little and little, and each day rendered less impenetrable the solitude of which she was formerly so jealous that she fled to Paray to secure it. How this growing celebrity teased our modest Sister! All visitors were not animated with the most charitable intentions. Those even who were most disposed in her favor, came rather to examine than to be edified, eager to prove for their own satisfaction the truth of what was reported concerning her supernatural gifts. The *Retreat* of Father de la Colombière, now published, very naturally excited, by a mysterious allusion, a pious curiosity among the Jesuits, which their having a house at Paray gave them means of satisfying. Several of the Fathers came expressly to see her. One of the interviews has been described very

cleverly by one of Margaret's contemporaries, from whom we borrow a whole page:— .

"The Reverend Fathers of this holy society had for her a most special consideration: two of them, namely, Rev. Fathers de Villette and Croiset, journeyed here especially to see her, having heard of her virtues, and being persuaded that she was a soul to whom God familiarly communicated Himself. But they were much surprised at the first interview, when she came before them with such a downcast air, and such great reserve, that they could hardly get a word out of her. They were not at all pleased, and repented having come so far to visit a person who would say nothing to entertain them. They withdrew, greatly dissatisfied with their first visit, and quite resolved it should be their last.

"But next day they felt interiorly pressed to return, one after another, which they did with all the satisfaction they could wish. She spoke to them with such force and unction that they were astonished to find in a lady so much penetration, avowing that it could be only God that endowed her with all the knowledge she had, and they retired very well pleased at their success.

"From this time she corresponded with them, especially with Father Croiset, who has so well manifested the esteem in which he held her, by giving an abridgment of her life to the public, at a time when the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was greatly combated, which circumstance gave much opposition to an enterprise he quitted not, but surmounted all difficulties, knowing that the work of God is always traversed. He has greatly contributed to augment the devotion by his zeal and love for this Divine Heart."*

* Among the Jesuits to whom Margaret was personally known was also Father de la Pérouse, of whom the annals speak in these terms:

Behold how things fell out in the parlor of Paray. Despite her *abased exterior*, Margaret no sooner unfolds the infinite riches of the Sacred Heart of Jesus than she gains all; won by the charm and power of her unction, none can long persist in refusing to become associates in her holy enterprise. This Fathers de Villette and Croiset experienced, especially the latter, who became one of the most fervent disciples of the Sacred Heart, to which he consecrated his pen. He never forgot the victorious touches of grace attached to the words of the Blessed Margaret, and in his *Abridgment* of her life he says: "None of all who had the advantage of speaking to her failed to experience an extraordinary sensation at her words, or withdrew from her conversation without making a new resolution to love Jesus Christ more ardently."

Ah! she knew how to speak of God "in a charming and profitable manner," to use the expression of a witness, who referred to the distant but lively recollections of her spiritual infancy. When she explained the rules to the novices, it was "with a heavenly unction which seemed

"Father de la Pérouse came to Paray desirous of seeing Margaret Mary, on account of the esteem in which Father de la Colombière had held her. Some days after their conversation he came to thank Mother Greyffié for the favor she had done him, assuring her that without having told this holy maiden any thing of his dispositions, she spoke as if she had read his inmost soul. The Superior wishing to know whether she felt mortified, as she commonly did on going to the parlor, she answered, 'No, because Our Lord immediately made known to me that these Religious were very dear to His Sacred Heart.'" Father Lean, who knew how to prize the happiness he frequently enjoyed of conversing with Margaret, says: "The Spirit of God spoke by her mouth, and half an hour's conversation I had with her touched me more than many hours of prayer. Hence I visited her as often as I could, and so high is my idea of her merit, her virtue, and her power with God, that a day rarely passes in which I do not invoke her as my good advocate in heaven, whose powerful protection I have often felt."

to flow from the very Heart of Jesus, and which facilitated the practice of virtue in a delicious manner."*

Several of the young professed had already made their novitiate under others, but they thought they heard these things for the first time. Never had they so clearly comprehended the greatness of their vocation; they said to each other, like the disciples of Emmaus: *Were not our hearts burning within us when she spoke?*

She had a peculiar and somewhat original manner of expressing herself, which left a strong impression on the memory. The arrows penetrated to the depth of the soul; she carried you away with her, and it was not easy to disengage yourself from her. Would she engage some one to silence the murmurings of nature, and bear for love of Jesus Christ things most contrary to the inclinations? *What does it matter,* said she, *of what wood our cross is made, provided that it is a cross, and that the love of Him who died on it for love of us, fastens us to it? This ought to suffice for us.* A great maxim of hers was:—*Life is given us to suffer, eternity to rejoice.* Then she would earnestly ask her companions: *What can hinder us from being saints, since we have hearts to love and bodies to suffer?* After which, this heroic soul would add: *I see nothing that so much sweetens the weariness of life as always to suffer in loving.*

How could any one hear such language without being profoundly affected, especially when it was known beyond doubt that she ever nourished herself with this bread, ere she broke it to her Sisters and pious friends? Hence

* This is the expression of Sister de Farges. *Abridgment of the Life and Virtues of our most honored Sister, Claude-Rosalie de Farges, who died in this Monastery of the Visitation, Paray, May* 14, 1733, *in the seventieth year of her age and the forty-ninth of her profession, of the rank of Choir Sisters.*—M. S. Archives of Paray.

Father Colombière, on his return from England, found such abundant fruits: "It seems to me," he wrote, "that all blessings have been magnified since my departure." I can well believe it: the work of God was in good hands. Obliged to revisit the theater of his zeal, he sees that his absence has not retarded the work: when he came to Paray to die, he saw all his hopes realized. One of the projects nearest to his compassionate heart was to found a hospital. In a few years, instead of one hospital there were two, one for the sick, the other for the poor. Who could believe it? From that era, mendicity and vagrancy have been banished from Paray, not by the rigors of a merciless police, but by a paternal *surveillance* exercised by the officers of the hospital, who, in turn, look after the homeless and unfortunate. All was crowned by the establishment of a house of Hospital Sisters, which still exists, uninjured by the revolutions accomplished about it. When we consider these institutions, all mounting up to the same date, we feel that a great current of zeal and charity gave them birth: we need not go far to seek the source of it it; is in the Heart of Jesus, which, during the days of His mortal life, compassionated all sufferings and *healed all sinners.*

Great, then, was the share the illustrious lover of the Heart of Jesus had in the charitable enterprises of Father de la Colombière; and when he disappeared, she remained the counsellor and inspirer of those who continued his work. The founders of the hospital of Paray declared that more than once she sustained their drooping courage, and that, when all seemed desperate, she promised them success. Through her many generous maids, who hesitated to consecrate themselves to the service of the sick, were confirmed in their vocation, for she assured them that the work was from God, and that it would

succeed despite all obstacles. The prosperity of this house, where the good hospitallers join the life of Martha with that of Mary, attests to this very hour that it was founded with a foresight that then seemed rashness.*

Would we see still more closely the wonderful empire she exercised over souls? The vocation of Mademoiselle de Lionne, one of the penitents of Father de la Colombière, will furnish us with a remarkable example. If this distinguished person, after a long resistance to grace, ended by tearing herself from a world that had taken her captive, and becoming a virtuous Daughter of St. Mary, with a humility proof against all trials, and a ravishing simplicity, she owed it, under God, to Margaret Mary. It may be added that she was one of the noblest conquests, one of the most beautiful gems in the crown of the holy Sister, and hence she merits a place in this history.

To all the advantages of birth and fortune, this lady joined a rare beauty, of which she was very proud, and which attracted to her from all parts the most flattering homages. M. de Lionne, her father, one of the ancient

* The establishments of which we speak are St. Joseph's hospital for poor sick, and the general hospital of St. Louis, the former founded in 1679, at the instance of Father Colombière. In 1684, another Jesuit counseled several women and girls to devote themselves to the service of the sick. Blessed Margaret was consulted in various circumstances, now by M. Billet, physician to the hospital, now by Sisters Chalon and Dremere, both engaged in this establishment. The general hospital was founded in 1694, on account of the great mortality caused by indigence. The principal promoter of this hospital was one of the successors of Father de la Colombière, perhaps Father de la Villette, who was made in 1691 Superior of the residence. In every way this second foundation may be regarded as a consequence of the first, without which precedent the founders had never, perhaps, dared to undertake it.

nobles of Auvergne, having espoused Mademoiselle de Selorre, sister to a counselor of the parliament of Burgundy, fixed his residence at Charolais, where his wife possessed broad lands. The young Rosalie, such was the name of their daughter, soon became the idol of the world; and her parents, who passionately loved her, were not her least enthusiastic admirers. Her beauty increasing with age, she soon became celebrated as one of the most lovely creatures in the province, and gained similar applause in Lyons, where her family resided for a while. Her imposing height, her majestic port, her exquisite politeness mingled with a noble haughtiness, gave her a certain queenly air, which repelled all but respectful sentiments. She was everywhere called the *belle.* Conscious of her own merits, she hardly deigned to notice the adulation of which she was the object, and spurned the most eager advances of the young lords that sought her hand. She had refused the hand of a prince; no mortal appeared to her worthy of fixing her choice, in which she was not ultimately deceived, since the King of kings had chosen her for His spouse. Even in the midst of her intoxicating successes, grace began to touch her heart, gently and sweetly soliciting it, and showing her the nothingness of all pleasures. Returning from a fête given her on the Saône, consisting of comedy, opera, and ball, at which she had appeared with splendor, it whispered: *That is not enough!* Then turning towards her hosts, she could not avoid saying: *You had promised me such beautiful things.* She loved the solitude of the woods, and aspired to retreat, but her liberty was so dear to her that it seemed as though she could never consent to sacrifice it. The first ideas of reformation came through a good Jesuit, Father Papon, who often went to her mother's house and was not afraid to let the family hear some

of his roughly spoken counsels. Seeing the ladies so elegantly decorated, he failed not to tell them that they were *whited sepulchres*, and then recommended them to dress more modestly. By his advice she gave up reading romances, in which she had taken a singular pleasure, because she imagined herself as the heroine of them; and she replaced them by books of piety, especially the *Imitation of Christ*, and of which she read a chapter every day. As she had a great soul and a compassionate heart, she excelled in charity to the poor, which she practised with extreme liberality. Sweet and affable with her domestics, her haughtiness appeared only when she was among persons of equal or superior rank: yet her great reserve always shielded her reputation, and she could not be reproached, say our Memoirs, with "a certain *come to me*" spread over her beautiful person, because artifice had no share in it, and it was very evident that she did not wish to be the object of a particular complaisance.

The touches of grace becoming daily stronger and stronger, Mademoiselle de Lionne began ardently to wish for a great knowledge of God. Now one day as she asked this in a Visitation chapel, through the intercession of St. Francis de Sales, he told her that he would soon send some one to give it to her, so far as was useful for her salvation. This was most consoling to her. It was not long till she experienced the sweet effects of the divine promise, for Father de la Colombière coming to Paray,* his first sermon, which he preached on Pentecost, filled his whole auditory with the effusions of his charity,

* We said above that the Father came to Paray in autumn, but he may have preached at Paray before he came to reside there. Or some inexactness may have glided into the recollections of Rosalie de Lionne, gathered fifty years later by a strange pen.

and Rosalie felt that the Holy Spirit spoke by his mouth. Yet grace had not a complete triumph till she heard him preach on the Feast of St. Augustine; as she herself recounts, she felt a strange pleasure when the bell of the Ursulines rang for the sermon: urged by an interior movement, she said to her company: "It would be better for us to go hear this good Father preach than to remain here diverting ourselves." All agreed to accompany her; it seemed that day to Rosalie that the Father preached only for her, and she found the aspirations of her own heart in the words of the great saint that day, whose festival was celebrated: *O Beauty ever ancient and ever new, too late have I known Thee, too late have I loved Thee!* The arrows of grace penetrated to the depths of her soul, and though she could not reproach herself with the excesses which this great doctor so bitterly bewailed, it seemed to her that she had no less reason to weep, since, having been brought up in Christianity, she possessed not its true spirit. At the same moment she acknowledged that the preacher who affected her so strongly was the guide God had promised her, and, persuaded that he had come to the town especially for her good, she at once gave him her whole confidence.

The Father was not slow to perceive that God had saved this soul from the corruption of the world to make of it a conquest worthy of Himself. More than once he had remarked to Mother de Saumaise that Rosalie was an angel, and had preserved her baptismal innocence. Attentive to follow in all things the designs of grace on her, he endeavored to watch its movements, and to avoid carefully in the beginning all that might hurt her delicacy. She often afterwards said that had she not been *managed* by such skillful hands, she had soon abandoned devotion

He knew how to render it easy to her at first, till she engaged herself generously in its exercise, despite the terrible ideas she had of it: it cost her a great deal to renounce several affectations of language then fashionable, and a certain pleasant turn she knew how to give things to make conversation agreeable, imagining that if she spoke with less exaggeration, but less humor, she should be less esteemed. Her wise director assured her that this would not be the case, and he was right. She asked him to permit her certain adornings which she would not do without; he made no difficulty of granting her request, but took care to add, "God will Himself teach you what He desires of you." Effectually, as soon as she began to adorn herself, she felt a secret aversion for these superfluities, so much so that she soon asked him to dispense her from using them, to which he willingly consented. What above all enchanted her was, that he sometimes condescended to pass a few days at Selorre, her mother's residence, and to authorize by his presence the innocent pleasures she took in her own family; and as she most passionately loved dancing, he never took it amiss to see her take a few turns on the floor.

Thanks to guidance so sweet and charitable, Rosalie by degrees familiarized herself with devotion, and the time at last came which saw her resolutely embrace all its practices, without losing any thing of the lively and agreeable disposition which caused her to be so well received in society. Visiting the churches and the hospitals became her dearest pleasures; holily prodigal, she gave to the poor whatever fell into her hands, so that it was sometimes necessary to moderate the indiscreet effusions of her charity. She was very sad when he left for England, but he continued to direct her from afar by his letters, of which she received a great number, and in

which she always found counsel suited to the state of her soul.

She did not as yet dream of becoming a Religious. But God, who wished to possess her without division, and who already spoke secretly to her heart, made her more attentive to His voice by an extraordinary event, which robbed her in a moment of the splendor of her beauty. We shall leave her Sisters to speak of this, for they heard from herself what they have related in their edifying *Abridgment of her Life.*

"One morning when she awoke, her curtains not being entirely closed, she saw near her bed a nobleman of the province, who had long been her suitor, and who had lately been killed in a combat. He was kneeling, his hands joined, and, heaving a great sigh, he said, with an air of intense suffering: 'Ah! Mademoiselle, how great God is, how holy and how just! Nothing is small in His eyes; all must be punished or rewarded.' She inquired whether God had shown him mercy. He answered in the affirmative, and said that it was his charity to the poor that had saved him. We are ignorant of what passed after this, but our dear young lady became so pale and altered that she could scarcely be recognized, so that her mother asked, as soon as she saw her, what had happened, observing that she had grown ten years older in one night. She took care to conceal what she had seen and heard, but was so strangely struck by it that the beautiful bloom of her complexion never returned again.

"Nevertheless," adds the pious biographer, "she could not resolve entirely to quit the world, where she lived in a holy liberty as regards her charities: she imagined that she could do more good there than in the cloister, where she would be useless to the poor, whom she relieved with all her power."

Here, Margaret Mary intervened in a supernatural manner, for, having heard what we have just related, she could not doubt of Rosalie's vocation, though she was not as yet personally acquainted with her. Forced by one of those irresistible movements which never deceived her, she wrote to tell Father de la Colombière that *Mademoiselle de Lionne should be a Religious, because Our Lord willed it.* The Father, understanding that this was the result of a revelation, hesitated not to write to his penitent, and direct her to visit *the Sister, who,* he said, *was the holiest person he had ever known.*

Rosalie experienced an extreme dislike to obey this command. Quite young, she had already taken a rooted aversion to the cloister, and used to say that the sight of the grating was enough to make her faint. Nothing but her extreme confidence in the holy Jesuit could induce her to repair to the parlor of the Visitation. When Margaret Mary appeared, "wholly concentred in her nothingness," Rosalie repented of having asked for her: "Her manners are too constrained," thought she immediately. "She will tell me that I must be a Religious, but I shall not do so." The *abased air* that rebuked holy Religious like Fathers Croiset and Villette, must have had a freezing effect on a soul still weak and full of the world. And yet, such was the wonderful unction of the words of Margaret, that Rosalie was touched at the very first interview, and promised to follow all her counsels, except that of entering religion. On this point she plainly declared that she would not hear a word.

One day, she received a letter from Father de la Colombière, which commenced thus: *You must die to yourself, my dear daughter.* Scarcely had she read the terrible words, *you must die,* than she stopped short, and almost fainted. Then giving free course to her tears, she

let all her family see she was in grief, without affording them the pleasure of consoling her, since she obstinately refused to tell her dread secret, even to her mother. One of her most intimate friends, coming to see her in the afternoon, found all the family in the greatest trouble, and still fasting. At the reiterated instances of this person, Mademoiselle showed the fatal letter, and her friend at once perceived that there was no question of vocation at all, but only of Christian renunciation, a happy discovery, which stilled the tempest and restored peace to the house.

Shortly after this scene, Sister Margaret sent for her: she came to the monastery all trembling; she would not come near the grate, but inquired from the door why she had been sent for. "That you might during thirty days pray for my intention," replied the Servant of God. This was a practice to which she often had recourse to obtain light on the subject of vocations. "She insists on making me a Religious," said Mademoiselle interiorly, "but I shall mar her prospects, for my chief intention will be not to be called to it." Scarcely had the thirty days ended, when our Blessed Sister received new assurances from Our Lord that Rosalie should be entirely His. This she made known to Father de la Colombière, who was then at Lyons; the holy Director immediately wrote to his penitent that "she should prepare to make a great sacrifice which God was about to ask of her, and which he earnestly desired to tell her himself." Not to be deceived, Rosalie, after reading these words, set out for Lyons in company with one of her brothers, and reached it more dead than alive, like a criminal about to hear the fatal sentence. She knelt before the Father and told him, in a trembling voice, that she had come to receive his orders, and to sacrifice herself in every thing without reserve. He

replied with a heavenly air: "If Jesus Christ would ask you to become His Spouse, could you refuse Him, my child?"

"O my Father!" she exclaimed, but she could say no more, now that she saw through it all. "Would you refuse such an honor, my daughter—would you refuse Jesus Christ? God wills it." As he spoke this, all her pains vanished, and she felt as though she were in Paradise. With a heart filled with indescribable consolation, she promised to consecrate herself to the Lord in holy Religion. When she was traveling back to Paray, transported with joy, she could not help saying: "If to hear a person speak who loves Thee, O my God, is something so ravishing, what must it be to see Thee, to hear Thee, to possess Thee eternally?" Then, bidding farewell to all, she said: "Adieu, brooks; adieu, meadows; adieu, gardens; adieu, little birds!" She reached home without perceiving the length of the road or the fatigues of the journey.

But her mother could not consent to separate from a child so tenderly cherished, and she ceased not to represent to her that, as she had full liberty to practise her devotions at home, she could be no obstacle to her salvation by opposing such a design. Hence arose a terrible combat; little by little the poor girl felt her repugnance to the religious life revive. A whole year passed before she could break her strong, sweet bonds, and, indeed, she had never gained the victory without the assistance of our dear Margaret, who displayed on this occasion an extraordinary, and, so to say, divine vigor.

One morning, all transported and ravished, she went to Mother Greyfié, and said: "My Mother, Our Lord absolutely wishes for that soul." The worthy mother, seeing that the Spirit of God spoke by her mouth, immediately

sent for Mademoiselle de Lionne, who happened to be at mass in the convent chapel, and was undergoing a great interior struggle. On coming from mass she received the message, and went at once to the parlor, where Mother Greyffié and Margaret awaited her. Both told her she should enter the monastery at once, because such was the will of God. At these words, she was tempted to resist a determination so strange and sudden, but she submitted to God. Yet she told one of her friends, that if she saw Purgatory opened beneath her feet, she would plunge into it rather than endure such a combat again. She entered the cloister in the hope that she could not live there fifteen days, so great was her horror of conventual life, and yet she spent more than forty-five years therein, and died an octogenarian. She was thirty-five when she entered, but she was still young in heart, and used frequently to jest with the young novices about her age, and call herself their *grandmother*. It gave great edification to see her learn all the practices of a life so new to her: the cloister was not quite so sad a place as she imagined. Her gayety was charming at the recreations, at which, as the rule says, *the conversation should be agreeable and holily joyous.* Her Sisters were surprised to see a person formerly so worldly, become in so short a time meekness and humility itself, and they sometimes said, punning on her name, that this haughty *Lionne* had become a meek lamb.

On the day of her profession, she experienced the suavity of heavenly consolations, which were henceforth habitual with her. Transported with joy at the thought that she belonged to her God forever, she thanked Him aloud, and joyfully kissed the walls of her cell and of her cloister, which separated her from a world to which she had been too much attached, and which seemed vile in

her eyes, since she had the happiness of dwelling in the holy paradise of Religion.

When Father de la Colombière returned to Paray for the last time, having called her to the parlor, he said: "How I rejoice, my daughter, to see you the spouse of Jesus Christ."—"O my Father, how good God is!" she exclaimed, and both remained as if in ecstasy, admiring the wonderful effects of grace, which they could explain only by their silence.

A person of quality, passing through Paray, inquired for Mademoiselle de Lionne; when told she was a Visitandine, he declared that he would not believe it, unless he saw her with his own eyes. Well, he did see her, and so much was he edified with her discourse, that he used afterwards say to every one: "I have conversed with a saint! Every lady may become a Religious, now that the cloister has so metamorphosed Mademoiselle de Lionne." We should not soon have done if we related all that her Sisters wrote of her obedience, her sweetness, her simplicity, her great familiarity with God in prayer, in which whenever it happened that aridity seized on her, or that Our Lord seemed not to respond to the eagerness of her love, she would humbly say: "My God, have the goodness to speak to me one word of life;" and if He still seemed deaf to her voice, she would add: "If you do not answer me, my Lord, I will go away." At length God would cease to afflict her, and, after having made her wait some time, would restore to her the sweets of His Divine presence.

After the death of the Father, who had so long directed her, she recurred more than ever to her to whom she owed the happiness of being a Daughter of Mary. Yet, through a questionable spirit of mortification, abstaining from these intimate communications, she was soon as-

sailed by strange troubles, which she hesitated to declare to Margaret, who, enlightened by Heaven, said to her: "You make a reserve which displeases God, and disturbs your interior." Rosalie acknowledged the truth of these words, profited by the charitable warning, and her peace of mind soon returned.

One day, both being in the infirmary when a sermon was about to be delivered in the church, Margaret Mary being unable to go, Sister Rosalie, sacrificing to charity the desire she had to hear it, thought she ought to remain with her, and our dear holy Sister assured her that God would recompense her devotion in such a manner as that she would be no loser by it. In effect, as they mutually interchanged pious thoughts, Blessed Margaret spoke of the Heart of Jesus, of his immense love for us, and the love He would inspire in us if we strove to make Him some return. She said such touching and beautiful things on this subject, and spoke with such unction, that Sister de Lionne afterwards said that she profited more by this discourse than by ten sermons.

Let us pause before this tableau, where we see in the reunion of two persons so different, and in the pious intimacy formed between them, the wonderful power of divine love. Can we imagine a more complete transformation than that accomplished in the character and habits of Rosalie de Lionne? This lady of quality, so haughty, so fiery, so captivated with the world, so horrified at the very thought of the cloister, that she approached it in fear and trembling, is now in the humble infirmary of the Visitation, *tête-à-tête* with Margaret Mary, whose least words she gathers with such avidity. Assuredly, of all the miracles of the Blessed Sister, this is not the least shining, to those who know the abysses of the human heart. Ah! without doubt, such examples are not rare,

they are daily renewed before our eyes. They are eloquent attestations that Jesus is still with His own, as indeed He will be till the consummation of ages. For the greater part, it is true, they pass unnoticed, and this may be explained: is there no one interested in ignoring them? The world does not like to own itself vanquished, and it is not to be at all expected that it would evince eagerness in proclaiming its own defeats. But the world, whether it admit the fact or not, never deserts a heart of which it was the master, unless it be driven out by a power superior to its own.

CHAPTER XXV.

Margaret Mary's Intercourse with her Relations.—Her Affection for her Brothers.—Letters.—Anecdotes.—Illness of Madame Alacoque.—Incidents.—Her Death.

SINCE the day on which our Blessed Sister, escorted to Paray by her brother Chrysostom, had bid an eternal adieu to the world, she had lost her mother,* and of all the brothers God had given her, only two, James and Chrysostom, remained to her. She was far from forget-

* In the Memoir Chrysostom Alacoque has left us of his sister, he says that she entered religion only after the death of their mother. Yet Margaret was received in the monastery of Paray in May, 1671, and it is certain that Philiberte Lamyn Alacoque died only in July, 1676, as the following entry proves:—

Extract from the Mortuary Register of the Commune of Versovre for the Year 1676.

July 27, 1676, I, the undersigned, certify to have interred Dame Philiberte Lamyn in the church of Versovre, in the tomb of her ancestors; she was about sixty-four years old, and died fortified with all the sacraments necessary for a faithful Christian, in presence of M. James Alacoque, subdeacon, and M. Chrysostom Alacoque, citizen of the said parish.

(Signed) ALACOQUE, ALACOQUE, ALACOQUE.

With this before our eyes, it is easy to conjecture that age and the distance of events confused somewhat the recollections of Chrysostom Alacoque. We may add here, that in our note on the Alacoque family we were wrong in saying that John died in childhood. He was twenty-three when he died (1640–1663).

ting her friends, or ceasing to hold intercourse with them. It is true that she declined entering the monastery of Charolles, lest she should be distracted by their too frequent visits. But, in depriving herself of the joys of the domestic hearth, she did not divest herself of all affection for her relations. God did not exact this of her, for it must not be imagined that the evangelical counsels, in glorifying the sacrifice, give entrance to insensibility and indifference under the guise of virtue.

Jesus Christ, by a closer union with His Divine Heart, the source of all tenderness, did not render His Spouse a less loving sister or daughter. Consecrated to Him who, with His expiring breath, confided His Mother to His dearest disciple, she knew how to love with a love like to His, purer, stronger than terrestrial love, and always ready to immolate self without reserve. By it she attracted her brothers toward this Divine Heart, whence they drew in their turn, for their dear sister, sentiments superior to those of nature, and of ineffable sweetness.

From childhood, by the amiability of her character, she inspired them with a lively tenderness which finds expression in every page of the Memoir of Chrysostom, written after her death. She herself frankly confessed that not only her mother, but also her brothers, by their great affection for her, seemed "to authorize her to give herself a good time." When she was of an age to marry, Chrysostom, being her honorary guardian, offered her a portion, that she might do so the more advantageously; and when she decided on entering the Visitation, he would have given her a pension, had she not refused it through love of poverty. James and Chrysostom, too, appear to have been greatly united; when separated at Versovre we soon find them together again at Bois-Sainte-Marie, where both settle, and fulfil honorable functions, the one

in the Church and the other on the Bench. In the absence of the Curé, his brother the Mayor took care of his benefice and other temporalities. It will not be useless to remark, that if Chrysostom was a little older than Margaret, James was four years younger. This circumstance introduces into the intercourse of the Sister with the latter, some of those delicate shades which can be more easily imagined than described: she never forgets that he is a priest, and he always remembers that she is his eldest sister.

In 1687, the Curé experienced the effects of the friendship of his holy sister, and of her power with the Heart of Jesus. Attacked with a sort of apoplexy, he soon lost speech and hearing, his teeth being so tightly closed that the physicians were obliged to break one in order to give him medicine. Having exhausted the resources of their skill, they declared his case hopeless, but his brother Chrysostom sent an express to Sister Margaret, entreating her prayers. She gave the messenger three billets containing invocations of the Heart of Jesus, saying that the sick man was to take some of the water in which they were steeped. By this means, she not only thought of testifying her boundless confidence in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, but also of escaping the repute of a Thaumaturgus, which was beginning to follow her. To the great astonishment of the physicians, thanks to this draught, of which they knew not the secret, the patient recovered perfect health.

But for this loving sister, it was not enough to prolong the days of her cherished brother; life was of no account in her eyes unless dedicated entirely to the love of Jesus Christ, and this occasion was too favorable not to be turned to advantage for conquering to the Divine Master

a heart well disposed, no doubt, but still divided, and too sensible to earthly things.

"It is a sweet consolation to me, my dearest brother," she writes, "that the goodness of the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ deigns to make His will agree with ours, by keeping you yet a little longer here below, in this place of misery and tears, where we must confess with the sage, that *all is vanity and vexation of spirit*, except, indeed, to love and serve God. This I have promised Him you would do if He gave you a little more time to live; thus, my dear brother, I have made promises to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord to obtain this, believing that you will effectually realize them, for God cannot be mocked."

She next tells him that a person he loved very much (evidently herself), being in prayer for him, could obtain what she asked in his favor only on condition that he would become a holy priest; that he would renounce habits little conformable to the greatness and dignity of his sacred calling, as fondness for play, superfluity in dress, curiosity in worldly matters, &c., and that whatever he retrenched by this amendment should be given to the poor. She warns him that these promises have been made in his name, in the hope that he would not disavow them, and that he would consecrate himself entirely to this Adorable Heart, for which he should procure all possible honor and glory wherever he had influence or power.

There is a charming expression in this letter, a phrase that could come only from a sister accustomed to rely on the tenderness of her brother. After having pressed him to devote himself to the Heart of Jesus, she says: "Love Him if you wish me to love you, for I can love only what He loves." Such a threat had no terrors for the brother

of Margaret We see him soon after unite with his brother Chrysostom, to procure new adorers for the Heart of Jesus, and establish its perpetual worship in his parish church. Henceforth the letters of this Blessed Sister evince an increase of affection, to which we may well believe this excellent brother was not insensible. Thus she writes:—

"You could not afford me greater delight, dearest brother, than by telling me how fervently the Adorable Heart of Jesus animates you to love Him, and to make Him known by endeavoring with all your strength to establish in souls the reign of His pure love. Ah! it is indeed true that you have spoken what is most capable of touching my poor heart, which is alive only to this one feeling, and which desires and breathes only to see that of our good Master reign in all hearts capable of loving Him. Now I can no longer doubt of the holy union His pure love has wrought in our hearts, since it has given you a holy desire I should not dare to propose to you; the Sacred Heart not permitting me to do it, that you might make the first overture of your own free-will. It is now that I recognize your true affection, since it begins to give me the proofs I have been longing for.

"Ah! my dear brother," she says, in conclusion, "do not let our lives dishonor our holy vocation, which requires of us a life wholly angelic. You see the freedom our pious union gives me to tell you without ceremony what comes into my mind, knowing that a true love of the Sacred Heart excuses every thing."

Blessed Margaret Mary is at the climax of her happiness when she sees her two brothers working in concert to cause the Heart of Jesus to be honored in the little town in which they dwelt. The perpetual Mayor erects a chapel, the Curé founds masses, God recompenses their

zeal with abundant benedictions. "You could not believe," she writes to Mother de Saumaise, "the change the Divine Heart has wrought in this family." She became for her dear relations the interpreter of the will of heaven; they consulted her in every emergency, and never received her advice without full assurance that it came from the source of every good and perfect gift,* from the Father of Light.

This, Angelica Aumonier, wife of Chrysostom, experienced; the heavenly counsels of her blessed sister-in-law enabled her to bear the long and cruel suffering by which God willed her to purchase the happiness of dying the death of the just. Urged by a secret movement of grace, she one day besought her husband to take her to Paray, and there, when her blessed relative entered the parlor, the lady began to weep bitterly. "What, my wife," said Chrysostom, "did you come here to weep?" But Margaret, interrupting him, said, "Let her weep; these are good tears." Monsieur Alacoque, conjecturing that there was some mystery in this, retired for a while, in order to give Madame Alacoque an opportunity of speaking more freely. The Servant of God then asked the cause of these tears, adding, that she would willingly comfort her if she could. "Oh! you can," replied the lady immediately, "by asking of God my salvation at any price." After a moment's reflection, Margaret whispered: "Have

* One day the curé being at Paray, with his cousin, Father Lamyn, a Dominican (probably a son of the uncle at Mâcon, whom we have already mentioned), feared that the excessive liveliness of this young Father might be disagreeable to his sister, and hinted as much to their cousin. But Margaret, overhearing the remark, said to her brother: "Let him laugh and amuse himself; these are his last joys." She then told him he had not long to live. Father Lamyn, on his return to Mâcon, was seized with a grievous illness, which carried him off in five days.—*Processes of* 1715.

you well considered this ?" And on receiving an affirmative reply, she said: "I will beg your salvation of God as if it were my own, but God tells me that it will cost you much."—"No matter, I will submit to the will of God, let Him do with me as He pleases," was the quick rejoinder.

Chrysostom, having returned some time after, learned from his sister what had happened, and it is he who has transmitted these details, which he consigned to writing, and afterward attested upon oath, when the first juridical informations were taken for the cause of Blessed Margaret.

Two days after his return home, Madame Alacoque was seized with an acute pain in the head and face, so violent that she cried aloud continually. Neither the waters of Bourbon nor those of Vichy, to which her husband brought her successively, could give her any relief. After multiplied medical consultations without any result, he took her to Lyons, but the best physicians declared they could do nothing for her: she reproached them for the little power their art gave them: "Madame," replied the Dean of the Faculty, "we are not gods upon earth." These Christian spouses saw that they must expect succor only from above; and they proceeded together to venerate the heart of St. Francis de Sales at Bellecour. The sick lady, wishing also to see Father Croiset, whom she knew to be a great friend of Margaret's, Monsieur Alacoque relates that whenever he visited her she was freed from her sufferings the whole time he remained, so much so, that she besought the Superior to send him every day, in which the latter kindly gratified her.*

* When this request was made, the Superior said: "These wonders do not surprise me. Father Croiset will go see her every day; but beware, both of you, of telling him about it, for if you should, he

This good Religious exhorted her to patience, repeating what Blessed Margaret had already said, that her pains would not cease until she was perfectly resigned to the divine will. From that moment, the words she had heard in the parlor of Paray were no longer an enigma: it was clear that the invalid would obtain her salvation from God, but only at the price of her life, which she found so difficult to relinquish.

"It is vain," wrote Margaret, "for you to seek human remedies; they will prove useless, for who can counteract the will of God, which is always accomplished, whether we will or not? To speak plainly, the salvation of the poor sufferer depends on this pain, on the good or bad use she now makes of it; and she should not even desire to know whether it will be of long or short duration. With tearful eyes I exhort you to follow my advice, because I know that God has sent her this illness as a proof of His love. He could not give her a greater mark of His anger than to cure her. When salvation is at stake, we must do all, suffer all, sacrifice all, and abandon all.

"Let her remember that the last time I saw her she told me to ask her salvation of God at any price. It is now too late to retract that.

"This is the time for a fruitful sowing for eternity, where the harvest will be abundant. Do not lose courage; trials borne with patience are worth a thousand times more than any austerity or penance."

For three months the invalid had been a prey to excruciating pains, which left her no repose day or night. Soon after her return from Lyons, she was warned anew that her sufferings would cease only when she had made an act of full and entire resignation to the will of God.

would not go any more." M. Alacoque adds that the same thing was renewed regularly at every visit of Father Croisot to Madame Alacoque.

Touched by a powerful grace, she no longer made any reserves, or placed any conditions to her sacrifice, and the very next day she slept peaceably in the Lord, and went to reap in joy what she had sown in tears. She was buried in a family vault prepared by the care of James and Chrysostom, under the pavement of the chapel of the Sacred Heart, which they had founded, and where both successively came to repose beside her.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Last Years of Margaret Mary.—Election of Mother Chateaumorand.—Frances Eleanor de Vichy-Chamron.—Anne Mary Laumonier.—Last Retreat of Blessed Margaret.

The last years of Blessed Margaret offer us the grand spectacle of a soul transformed in God, living the supernatural and mystical life which is attained by the saints, as Mother Seraphine Boulier well said, *through death, ashes and nothingness.* Henceforth she lived no more; Jesus Christ lived in her; and if her feet still touched the earth, her heart was not attached to it: her conversation was entirely in heaven.

When she quitted the charge of the Directress, in which she was succeeded by Sister Antoinette de Chateaumorand, she resumed the humble employs she had exercised during the greater part of her religious life, dividing her labors between the infirmary and the school. She found, as heretofore, numerous occasions of mortifying herself, of which she always showed herself holily avaricious; but her old repugnance had ceased; nature was mute and disarmed, so that it could no more grapple with grace, if we may say so. While she had charge of the little girls, a whitlow gathered on one of her fingers, the pain of which she bore in silence for some time. Unable to sleep, because of the intense agony it caused her, she used to spend the greater part of the night sitting by the fire in the room where they slept. One of

them at length observed her, and called the attention of the Superior, who at once sent for a surgeon, though the patient Sister said the pain was too trifling to be noticed. The surgeon made an incision quite to the bone, and came daily to dress the wound. Finding her almost insensible to the pain, he said, with astonishment and admiration: *Truly it is an excellent thing to be holy.* While this was in progress, she received a letter of sympathy from Mother Greyffié, but was greatly mortified to become an object of commiseration *for such a little thing.* "I believe," she answered this Mother, "that it is in punishment of my sins, that I cannot have the least cross without its being published." Then, interrogating her own heart, which she pitilessly scrutinizes, she adds, what she had experienced on this occasion, "that it is most agreeable to nature to have such sympathy, for it cannot resolve to suffer without support and consolation the humiliations, contempt, and abandonment of creatures. And yet this is what pure love demands, and without this our sufferings do not merit the name of sufferings."

Nothing was more painful to her than the marks of esteem and respect shown her by the Sisters; for example, when they nominated her assistant a second time, convinced, as they said, that so holy a Sister would draw grace on the community and on each of its members. All consulted her on their interior, and the novices, to whom she was occasionally sent to supply the place of Directress, continued to testify towards her the most filial confidence.* But she saw one day a more grievous

* We read in the *Abridgment of the Life and Virtues of Sister Frances Eleanor Vichy-Chamron:* "She had the happiness of having for Directress one most honored Sister, Catherine Antoinette de Chateaumorand, her relative, toward whom she showed the most charming docility. Our venerable Sister Alacoque sometimes supplied the place of this

trial in prospect: on Holy Thursday, probably the year of her death, 1690, Our Lord presented her with a cross, which she eagerly accepted, not comprehending what it signified; and when she had made the sacrifice, it was told her that she would be proposed for Superior. Greatly grieved, she lovingly complained to Our Lord: "Is it possible Thou canst permit such a creature as I to be exposed at the head of a community? I beg of Thee, as a favor, to remove this heavy cross from me; I submit to all others Thou mayest send."

The Lord yielded to her request, and Mother Antoinette was elected, to the great joy of our humble Sister, who, not content with her first success, immediately besought the new Superior to depose her from the office of Assistant. But this time Our Lord perceived that she abused His condescension: "What!" said He, "I have yielded to thy will, and for the love of Me wilt thou not do violence to thyself?" She immediately asked pardon, and resigned herself to the wishes of her Superior, who did not release her from the charge, which she held till her death, a few months later.

With all her precautions, the luster of her sanctity drew many eyes upon her. People often came to the parlor to hear from her mouth some consoling word of their deceased relations and friends. "Do you believe that I know what passes in purgatory?" said she to them; but they soon learned that she was no stranger to it. The secular men that sometimes worked within the cloister would say to each other as they perceived her in the distance: "Behold the Saint." A good lay Sister, admitted early in 1690, experienced in a sensible manner

skillful mistress, and greatly relished the sweetness and simplicity of our dear Sister Vichy, writing her notes, which she carefully preserved, for the perfection of her soul."

how much God was pleased at the confidence reposed in His servant. Happening to begin her novitiate by the exercise of chopping wood, she one day wounded her knee with a hatchet. Fearing that she should be sent away if this were known, she concealed it for several days; but a second accident occurring, her pain and her anxiety increased; in this extremity she said, like the poor woman in the Gospel: *If I but touch the hem of her garment I shall be healed.* And bringing her wound in contact with the dress of her Blessed Sister, she found herself perfectly healed the next day.*

We may imagine the mortification inflicted on our humble Sister when the *Retreat* of Father de la Colombière arrived at Paray, and was read in the refectory. He there made allusions which for the community were no riddle; the following for example: "God then enlightening the person, whom we have reason to believe is according to His own Heart, by the great graces He has given her, she fully explained herself to me, and obliged her to write what she had told me," &c. Every one knew who this person was, and all eyes were involuntarily turned on her. She was annihilated. Going out of the refectory, Sister de Farges said to her: "My

* This Sister, who was called Anne Mary Laumonier, took the habit January 8, 1690. We must not be surprised at the little skill she displayed in managing the axe, for her previous training had not prepared her for such rough work. She was of good family, as may be gathered from the following extract from the mortuary register: "Sept. 10, 1746, died in this monastery of Paray, and buried at 4 next evening, our dear Sister Anne Laumonier de Chalanforge, called in Religious Sister Anne Marie, native of Chalanforge, in Màcconais, daughter of William Laumonier, gentleman of Chalanforge, and the Lady Frances de Thésut; in the sixty-eighth year of her age, and the fifty-sixth of her profession, of the rank of Lay Sisters. She reposes in the vault of our sepulchre."

dear Sister, you have had your account to-day, and Father Colombière could not better define you." What reply did she make? She simply bowed her head, and resigned herself to this species of celebrity, which was for her a cruel suffering. Besides, the honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus required that these things should not be kept entirely secret. Hence the Servant of God often said that it was necessary she should die, and that she was only an obstacle to the exaltation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. These words were true, whether she comprehended them or not. While she lived, it was impossible to publish the wonders God had operated in her to accredit her mission. And indeed, what business had she on earth when there were no more crosses,—she who had ever cherished them as her dearest delights? "I shall surely die this year," said she, "because I no longer suffer." She understood life as St. Teresa did: *to suffer or to die!*

These presentiments of her approaching end betrayed themselves in the last letters which the eagerness of her Sisters to gather some of her words drew from her. It was in vain that, early in 1670, she informed Sister de la Barge of her resolution to take leave of creatures: "I could wish to write no more, that, in the first place, I may learn to do what I preach, for, as Our Lord says: *What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*" She was again obliged to gratify the longings of this worthy friend, but she adds to her letter a significant *post scriptum*, a true spiritual testament: "Remember that if I die before you, you must take my place before the Blessed Sacrament, to ask pardon of all the irreverences and outrages I have been guilty of; and if God shows me mercy, I promise not to forget you. I will do all in my power for you. Mean

while, believe, my beloved Sister, there is nothing that I would not do for you, sin excepted, and for your advancement in holy love. Let us love the Heart of Jesus. Let us love it for one another. Let us love it in all events, and let our watchword ever be: *Thy will be done.* Love and do what you please, for whoever loves does all. Do all by love, in love, and for love; for it is love that gives value to all. Love does not court a divided heart; it will have all or nothing. Love renders all things easy. Render, then, love for love, and never forget Him who through love died for you. Render Him love for love, and you can love Him only inasmuch as you suffer in silence, and prefer Him to all creatures whatsoever."

Seeing the end approaching, she desired to prepare for it by a last retreat, wholly interior, in the Adorable Heart of Jesus Christ. This retreat she commenced on the Feast of St. Mary Magdalen, 1690, her forty-third birthday: urged, says she, "to reform my life and put my affairs in order, so as to be ready to appear before the holiness of God." For this end she invoked especially the protection of the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and St. Francis de Sales, and in the simplicity of her faith she took for her Director Father de la Colombière, that she might learn of him to conform herself to the maxims of the Heart of Jesus our Redeemer.

Her reflections for the first and second days she put in writing, and they show the combat that took place in her soul between filial fear and sweet confidence in the infinite mercy of God,—confidence which ruled every other sentiment, and which took all bitterness from the contemplation of the rigors of divine justice. Here is this precious document, the last that came from her pen:—

"The first day of my retreat I was occupied in thinking whence this great desire of death could proceed, since it is not usual with criminals, such as I am before God, to be glad to appear before their Judge,—a Judge, too, whose holiness of justice penetrates to the marrow of the bones, from whom nothing can be concealed, who leaves nothing unpunished. How, then, my soul, canst thou so greatly rejoice at the approach of death? Thou thinkest only of ending thy exile, and art transported at the thought that thou wilt soon leave thy prison. But alas! beware, lest from a temporal joy which proceeds perhaps from ignorance and blindness, thou be plunged into eternal sadness, and fall from this mortal and perishable prison into those eternal dungeons where there will be no more place for hope. Leave, then, O my soul, this joy and these desires of dying, to holy and fervent souls for whom great rewards are prepared, and let us, whose works permit us to expect nothing but punishment, consider what we should expect if God were not more merciful than He is just. Wilt thou be able, my soul, to endure for eternity the absence of Him whom thou so ardently desirest to enjoy, and whose absence causes thee such excessive pain? My God, how difficult it is for me to settle this account, since I have lost my time and know not how to repair it! But in this strait, to whom can I apply but Thee, who art willing to undertake it for me; for this have I placed before Him all the articles on which I am to be judged, which are our rules, our constitutions and our directory; by these I shall be justified or condemned. After having remitted to Him all my interests, I experienced great peace at His feet, where He has long kept me, buried in my nothingness, there awaiting Him to judge the wretched criminal.

"The second day, all that I had been and then was

was presented to me as in a picture: but, my God! what monster could be more hideous to look at! I saw there no good, but so much evil that it was a torment for me to think of it. It seems as though every thing condemned me to eternal punishment for the abuse I had made of the many, many graces to which I have been so unfaithful. O my Saviour, who am I, for whose repentance thou hast so long waited? I, who have a thousand times deserved to be buried in hell through excess of my malice? As many times hast Thou prevented it by Thy infinite goodness. Continue, then, my amiable Saviour, to exercise Thy mercy on so base and mean a subject. Thou seest that I cheerfully accept all the pain and punishment which Thou mayest be pleased to inflict on me here and hereafter. I feel so much sorrow for having offended Thee, that I could wish to suffer all the pain due to sin, as preservative from it, before I had committed any, rather than have offended Thee so often. I desire not to shun any part of that vengeance which it may please the divine justice to exercise upon this criminal, if He will not abandon her to herself, and by new falls punish her for past sins. Deprive me not of Thy love eternally! O my God, and for the rest, do with me as Thou pleasest. I tell Thee all that I have and all that I am. All the good I can do cannot repair the least of my faults but through Thee. I am insolvent: Thou knowest it well, my Divine Master. Imprison me, I am satisfied, provided it may be in Thy Sacred Heart; and when I am there, keep me a close captive, held by the chains of love, until I have paid all that I owe Thee. As I never can do this, so never do I wish to leave that prison."

In these admirable sentiments she awaited death, of which she neither invited nor dreaded the approach. Nothing yet announced to her Sisters her coming dissolu-

tion; but, once more, what had she to do in this exile when she no longer suffered in it?

The evening sacrifice will soon be consummated. A pure flame so long fed by terrestrial aliments still rises from the altar, and warms only the ashes of the victim.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Foreshadowings.—Margaret's last Illness.—Her Death.—Her Obsequies.—Conclusion.

The time of the annual retreat having come in autumn, 1690, and even the vigil of the day fixed by the Superior on which our Blessed Sister was in her turn to abstain from all intercourse with her companions, and from the exercises of the active life, to refresh her soul in the holy repose of contemplation, she was seized with a slight fever, which excited no alarm among those about her, accustomed as they were to see her daily surmount more violent maladies in order to attend the common exercises. She, however, was not indifferent to it, lending an attentive ear to the voice of the Celestial Spouse who called to her from the summit of the eternal hills. A Sister having asked whether she would be able to enter retreat—"Yes," she replied, "but it will be the great retreat," alluding to her departure from this place of exile. To Sister de Farges, who waited on her, she said: "I shall expire in your arms." She had said the same thing to Sister Verchère, five years before.

Witness of her habitual infirmities, the physician often repeated that they were the effects of divine love, and that medicine could not relieve them. This time, having been called in, he said she would not die—that her illness was but trivial.

Yet the precise language of the dying saint, always

so prudent in her discourse, alarmed the Sisters. They entreated the physician to redouble his attentions, and he consented to come several times a day; but the more he saw of her, the more confirmed was he in the opinion that her illness was not of a grave character.

A Sister who watched by her, perceived that she suffered much from interior pains, of which it was impossible to penetrate the cause; and as she offered her some relief, this great lover of the Cross remarked "that the few moments remaining to her were too precious not to derive profit from them; that in truth she suffered much, but not enough to satisfy her desires." She added, that "she found such great satisfaction in living and dying upon the cross, that however ardent her desire of enjoying God might be, she should have still greater satisfaction in remaining as she was till the day of judgment, if such were the good pleasure of God."

Already she seemed no longer to have a body. The most bitter remedies drew from her no mark of disgust. When asked whether she knew of any thing that could tempt her appetite, she answered that she knew of nothing, every thing being good, too good for her, who did not deserve any thing.

But, indifferent as she was to other things, she eagerly desired the Holy Viaticum, and when they refused, stating that her symptoms were not sufficiently dangerous to warrant it, she begged that she might be allowed to communicate, as she was still fasting. This favor being granted, she received Our Divine Lord with ineffable transports of love. She afterwards remarked to one of the infirmarians, that she had received Him for the last time. This was on the eve of her death.

God permitted, to imprint a salutary fear on the witnesses of her struggle, that she should once more be in-

vested with the intimate presence of the sanctity of justice. Trembling all over, she pressed her crucifix to her heart, heaving profound sighs, and exclaiming with tears: "Mercy! my God, mercy!" The subject of her terror was, said she, the loss of the time she had not employed sufficiently well for her salvation. But soon these fears vanished, she experienced a great calm, and serenity reappeared on her countenance. She was heard to repeat joyously: *The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever!* And again: *What have I in heaven, and what do I desire on earth but Thee, my God.*

Then, her humility becoming alarmed at the thought of the papers she had written by order of her Directors, and which betrayed her supernatural gifts, she entreated Sister de Farges to burn them. But the latter observing that she ought to place them in the hands of the Superior, and sacrifice her inclinations to holy obedience, at the word obedience she was silent.

As she saw the Sisters grieving because of her approaching demise, she consoled them by repeating what she had so often said before, that her death was necessary to the glory of the Sacred Heart. The meaning of these words, and their accomplishment, will appear in the sequel of this history.

The last day of her life had dawned, yet no one would believe that her end was near. Even the physician assured her that she should not die; to which she mildly replied: "We shall see." And when he, persisting in his opinion, added gayly, that he would lay a wager on it, she said in the same tone, "that it was not much matter, after all, that a secular should contradict a Religious, and that she would have great pleasure in allowing him to believe what he pleased about it."

A little while after she was informed that the Superior

had sent to apprise her family of her illness, but she answered, "I shall never see them on earth." And in a few moments she added: "Let us die, and sacrifice all to God."

In proportion as her strength failed, her soul, disengaged from terrestrial bonds, aspired more ardently to heaven. An oppression came upon her, which rendered it impossible for her to remain in bed. The infirmarians placed her in a sitting posture, that she might breathe more freely, and that her chest might be relieved of the internal heat that devoured it. "I burn, I burn," said she; "if it were from divine love, what a consolation! But I have never known how to love my God perfectly." Then addressing the infirmarians who supported her, she said: "Ask Him to forgive me, and you yourselves love Him with all your hearts, to repair the moments in which I have not loved Him. Ah! what a happiness to love God! Love then this Lover, but love Him perfectly and solely!"

One of them having asked her to obtain three particular graces, she promised to remember her before God if He had mercy on her, and this Sister learned, later on, that she had kept her word. The doctor having been again called, in consequence of the sudden fainting-fits that began to attack her, she again asked for the Holy Viaticum, but he assured the Sisters that the following day would do, on which she said to Sister de Farges: "Happily I foresaw that. I knew very well they would not think me so ill. This is the reason that, the last time I communicated, God gave me grace to receive Him as Viaticum."

As she appeared very calm, they left her to attend the community exercises; one infirmarian remained, with whom she conversed on the excess of God's love for His

creatures, and to whom she gave some spiritual advice. The holy invalid then asked if it was expected she could last much longer, and the infirmarian remarking that she knew well the physician's opinion on that subject, but as for herself, she did not think she would pass the next day: "Ah! Lord," she exclaimed, "when wilt thou release me from this exile?" Then she added, "*I rejoice in what hath been said to me; we shall go into the house of the Lord.* Yes, I hope that for the love of the Heart of Jesus Christ, we shall go into the house of the Lord, and that it will be soon." She charged this Sister, when she should see her in her agony, to call the Superior, and ask her to have recited near her bed the Litany of the Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, and to invoke for her her holy angel, St. Joseph, and the holy Founder of the Visitation Order.

Soon after, the patient becoming convulsed, the infirmarian went to call the Superior, but another Sister, who had just entered the room, thought it was only a passing weakness, and called back the infirmarian. "Let her go," said Margaret, "it is time." The Superior came, and immediately sent for a physician, but the Servant of God said: "My Mother, I need no one but God alone, and to be buried in the Heart of Jesus my Saviour." One look sufficed to convince the Sisters that her hour was come; they gathered around her bathed in tears. She collected her remaining strength to console them, exhorting them to be all for God, *without division or reserve*, and promising them that when admitted into His presence, she would prove her gratitude for all the affection she had experienced from them. One of them, in whom she had great confidence, she desired to write to Father Rollin, and conjure him to burn all the letters he had received from her, and to observe inviolable

secrecy regarding whatever he knew of her interior. She made a similar request to the Superior, and begged that she might never be spoken of in the Order except to have prayers procured for her soul.

Then she observed that it was time to give her Extreme Unction, and while she received this Sacrament with incomparable devotion, she was supported on either side by Rosalie Verchère and Rosalie de Farges, the last Sisters that entered the chamber, and who were placed near her not with any design on their own part, but by providential design, since thus was accomplished a prediction she had made them, as they afterward attested on oath. At the fourth unction, she gently expired in their arms, pronouncing the sacred names of Jesus and Mary, on the seventeenth of October, between seven and eight o'clock in the evening. She was forty-three years two months and four days, of which she had been nearly eighteen years in the monastery of Paray.

Death seemed to approach with respect this victim of Divine love; her face, more beautiful than before, was expressive of a sweet majesty, which infused into the bystanders joy and consolation. The mourning was profound and universal, but tempered by respect and admiration for such heroic virtues, the recital of which flew from mouth to mouth, and by the sweet odor of the holocaust exhaled with the last sigh of the just as an agreeable incense. At the same moment the cry: "The saint is dead," spread through the town. And the little children, whose praise is so perfect, were not the least eager to repeat it.

Next day the funeral attracted to the Church of the Visitation an extraordinary concourse. The virginal tegument of Margaret Mary remained the whole day, exposed to the eyes of the crowd, who, not content with

gazing on it, spoke aloud their veneration. Each wished for some relic; the papers she wrote and her poor wardrobe became subjects of dispute. From morning till evening two Sisters were occupied in touching the remains with beads brought from all sides; a similar scene had never been witnessed since the foundation of Paray, 1626.

On the eighteenth the cloister was opened, according to custom, to give entrance to the clergy, who were equally enthusiastic with the people, and the dear illustrious defunct was inhumed under the choir in the common burial-place of the Sisters of the monastery of Paray-le-Monial.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

First Honors paid to the Memory of Margaret Mary.—Testimony of Father Croiset.—*Ordinary Process* prepared.—Correspondence of Bishop Languet with the Sisters of Paray.—Sister de Farges a second Elias.—The Bishop publishes his Life of Margaret Mary, which he dedicates to the Queen, Mary of Poland.—Opposition raised against the Work.—Invective of the Bishop of Auxerre.—Clever Retort of the Archbishop of Sens.—Opposition of the Jansenists.—The Wits come to the Aid of the Doctors.—D'Alembert's Panegyric of the Archbishop.—Heclears His Grace of the *Imputation* of writing such a Tissue of Absurdities as the *Life*, &c.—Saint-Simon calumniates the Archbishop.—The Duke de Luynes' Testimony.—Pious Pilgrimages to Paray.—Festival at Paray.—"A strange Spirit."—The Bishop of Angers.—Mother Mary Constance governs himself and his Diocese.—Arnauld and Nicole lecture the Sisters.—The Monastery of Castellane.—Bishop Soanen.—His Suspension.—The Sisters refuse to acknowledge any other Superior.—They will not submit to the Holy See.—Meekness of the Abbé de Motte.—His ultimate Success.—The Community make public Reparation for the Scandal they gave.—The Visitation Order at the Period of the Revolution.—Instances of Heroism.—Several Nuns retire to Spain.—The French Invasion disperses them.—Wanderings of the Lyonese Sisters.—They carry with them the Heart of St. Francis de Sales.—Roland examines the Sisters.—Affecting Scene.

She is dead; henceforth we may divulge the wonders of grace, and break the seal that covered with impenetrable mystery so many celestial communications: With holy modesty and retiring fear, she had said: *My secret to myself.* Assuredly it is good *to hide the secret of the King*, but when that King is God, *it is honorable to re-*

*veal and publish his works.** Between these two sentiments she hesitates, she balances; now humility sways her, now zeal for the glory of God. To obey her Director, she had committed to writing the lights and graces with which she had been favored from childhood and during the course of her religious life. Despite the timid wishes she had expressed at the hour of death, this precious deposit was not destroyed, and soon the treasures it contained became the delight of pious souls. It is thus she contributed by her death to the glory of God, and the edification of the faithful, like a pure, fragile alabaster vase which is broken in the hands that carried it, that the whole house may be filled by the perfumes it contained.

Then could travel far these touching words, interpreters of immense love cruelly outraged: *Behold this heart which has so much loved men, and which in return receives only rebuffs.* They shall go like burning arrows to wound the most insensible hearts and inflame them with the fire of divine charity.

Blessed Margaret had said that the Heart of Jesus would be glorified by a book of Father Croiset's, and yet Father Croiset had declared to her that he had not leisure to write one: he knew not that unforeseen circumstances would impel him to undertake the work. When she died the book was already in press. The pious author felt the value of the new sources opened to him, and eagerly drew from them the elements from which he composed the *Abridgment of the Life of Margaret Mary.* Nothing was more effectual in contributing to propagate devotion to the Sacred Heart.†

* Tob. 12: 7.

† *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, &c. Later on, this book was put on the Index, either because of some inex-

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What eloquent simplicity in these pages! What sincere admiration for the humble heroine whose life he is at last permitted to recount, whose name he reveals to the veneration of the faithful! At the first stroke, Father Croiset assigns her her rank, her place in the annals of sanctity; it would seem as though faith discovered to him in advance the aureola with which the Church would one day crown her virginal forehead. Behold in what terms he speaks of her in this work:—

"It may be said that this amiable Saviour has united in our time, in the person of this holy Religious, all the extraordinary graces He had given in times past to the greatest servants of God. She often had the happiness of conversing familiarly with Jesus Christ, like St. Mechtildis, and St. Gertrude. The Son of God gave her His Heart, as He had given it to St. Catherine of Sienna, having taken hers, which He purified and inflamed with His pure love, as He had done with reference to that good saint. He would leave to her, as to St. Teresa, a continual and sensible proof of this extraordinary grace, by a pain in the side, which no human remedy could assuage, and which accompanied her to the tomb."

He concludes by expressing a wish that a more complete work might be consecrated to recount the graces

act expressions, or because it contained Litanies and an office which had not received the sanction of ecclesiastical authority. What proves that these defects were trifling is, that the Italian translation is often quoted with eulogy in the acts of the cause of Blessed Margaret, and that it has often been reprinted with the approbation of ecclesiastical Superiors. An edition easily procured is that entitled, *Motivi mezzi e pratiche della divozione al Sacro Cuore di Gesus, opera del* P. Croiset. Milano, Giacomo Aguelli, 1845; with the approbation of the Cardinal Archbishop. It must be remembered that the decree of the Index does not bear upon the *Abridgment of the Life*, for which we have the guarantee of the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation.

with which Our Lord enriched this illustrious lover of His Divine Heart.

Such was the first public homage rendered to the memory of Margaret Mary, while at the same time the confidence of the people was excited by the extraordinary favors obtained, according to contemporaneous witnesses, who affirm that cloths laid on her tomb had healed many sick; that by the intercession of this holy Sister, hearing had been restored to the deaf, sight to the blind, health to the paralytic. The instantaneous cure of Sister Claudia Angelica Moulins, attacked for three months with paralysis, and a prey to extreme sufferings, was so remarkable that Father Languet de Gergy, Vicar General of Autun and Superior of the house, deemed it his duty to record this new testimony of the sanctity of her whose virtues he had long admired in herself, and in the Religious she had trained. "This miracle," says he, "after the information I had taken, appeared to me so well authenticated, and besides I had heard so much of the wonders wrought by the Servant of God and her devotion, that I judged it was not proper to bury in oblivion the wonders of God, wonders, too, so conducive to the edification of the faithful." He then conceives the thought of taking more complete informations, in which he explains himself thus:

"As there was still many persons living who had been ocular witnesses of the heroic actions of this virtuous maiden, and the miraculous graces she had received, or which were granted to her intercession, I counseled the Sisters of Paray not to let these things perish, and to obtain of the Bishop of Autun permission to have juridical informations taken thereupon. This prelate, at the request of the Superior of Paray, did me the honor to nominate me commissary in this business, and gave me power to name another commissary in case I should be

hindered from attending to it. I proposed to collect these pious monuments and embody them in a history for the advantage of the Visitation Order, after the facts should have been juridically certified. Before finishing my commission, I was nominated Bishop of Soissons. I then substituted in my stead, according to the power I had received, Father Antony Bansière, Prior of the Benedictines at Paray, a man respectable for his piety and wisdom, as well as for the high offices he had already filled in his Order. This Religious, by a labor of several months, finished the work: he gathered all the writings of the Servant of God, and the Memoirs concerning her life, and authenticated the truth of them. He took at leisure the depositions of many witnesses, within the house and without."

Thus was prepared the ordinary process of 1715, which we have so often quoted, a capital document which the Bishop of Soissons used in writing the Life of the Servant of God, and which, later on, was of great use in Rome in the cause of the beatification. Here may be seen the testimony of her most intimate contemporaries: her brother Chrysostom, who, despite his seventy-one years, has still a lively remembrance of the years passed together at Lanthecourt and Versovre, and testifies the most touching admiration for this flower of sanctity that expanded under his own eyes; M. Billet, physician of the convent, who was her medical attendant for many years, and who declared that she lived only by a miracle, and that she died by one; Frances Chalon and Jane Dremière, Hospital Sisters, encouraged by her in their vocation; Mary Chevalier and Catherine Billet, her old pupils, now Ursulines, who recounted many heroic acts they had witnessed in their childhood, and which made them regard their mistress as a saint; finally, Visitation

nuns, Elizabeth de la Garde, Augusta Marest, Rosalie de Lionne; her ancient novices above all, those novices whom she loved so tenderly, and who were her first conquests to the Heart of Jesus; and at their head, Rosalie Verchère and Rosalie de Farges, who had the inestimable happiness of receiving her last sigh: all these voices united to form a magnificent concert of praises, and when it is remembered that Margaret Mary had then lain for twenty-five years in the tomb, we see that it is one of the privileges of sanctity to triumph in some manner over death and time.

These documents* and others were sent to the Bishop of Soissons, but, engaged as he was in the combat against Jansenism, a combat which continued all his life, and drew upon him the hatred and calumnies of that sect, it was long ere he could issue the work he had promised in 1715. The Sisters at Paray were astonished that it did not appear, and they earnestly besought him not to delay too much the execution of a work so useful to the glory of God and the good of souls. To Sister de Farges, the ordinary interpreter of the pious impatience of her companions, this prelate wrote, June 24, 1719:† "I would have already finished, my dear sister, the work for which you are so eager, if the pressing wants of the

* One of the two copies still at Autun would seem at first sight to be properly authenticated, but it is not, as may be seen by the following letter of the Bishop of Soissons to Sister Elizabeth La Garde, Superior of Paray: "The process I have received, my honored Mother, is not signed. The signatures of the commissaries, witnesses, and others are indeed there, but all in the same handwriting. You will have to procure the original of this *procès verbal*. The registrar will not refuse to give you at least a *fac-simile* of it."—MS. Annals of Paray.

† Autograph letters of the Bishop of Soissons.—Archives of Paray. MS.

Church had not allotted me others with reference to the new sect formed in this kingdom, and which I have combated for a year and a half by my writings. Had not this been the case, the work in which you are so much interested had been finished before this; but faith ought to go before piety, and when our Father's house is set on fire we should run to its defense in that part where the danger is most urgent." The next year, July 12, 1720, he writes to the same Sister: "Make mention of me at the tomb of our Blessed Sister Margaret Mary; the remembrance of her and of the wonders God has operated through her is ever present to me. You are right in reproaching me for my slowness in finishing her Life, but you know what has for a long time interrupted my work. I have run to the most pressing danger of the Church, and the writings I have issued in its defense were more necessary than the Life. The foundation of all is faith; when it is attacked we must, if necessary, relinquish all other good works for its defense."

And so from year to year he excuses himself for the non-fulfillment of his promise; after twelve years he announces that his manuscript is completed, and that he has only to revise it. "You will be much rejoiced at this news, my honored Mother," he writes; "thank God for me, and beseech Him to make me a sharer in the virtue of the holy Sister of whom I have written such wonders. I hope through your prayers, you who are the Eliseus of this Elias,* and who should have her spirit in a

* It was rather Sister de Farges to whom he addressed the above, who had the spirit of Elias, for she had a fiery temperament. Having been appointed *surveillante* of the novices, she carried her zeal for regular observance so far that she administered to the same Sister three reproofs a day for slight failings. For a long time she was regarded as a St. Jerome, who would make no allowances for nature,

two-fold manner, since you have seen her mount to heaven, while you held her in your arms with Sister Rosalie Verchère.

"You see by this that these things are still green in my memory."

The work finally appeared in 1729, with a dedicatory epistle to the Queen* and a preliminary discourse, rather long perhaps, but solidly weighed, in which the author undertakes to defend the supernatural from the incredulous, who then walked with head erect. He quotes very appropriately the following words, employed by Bossuet for a similar object many years previous:—

"The world relishes not these things; too often it even rails at them; they appear to it the effusion of a diseased imagination; the raptures of Divine Love are in its eyes but dreams and crude visions. The animal man, as St. Paul says, who is incapable of understanding the things of God, and does not even desire to understand them, is scandalized at them. The admirable operations of the Holy Spirit in souls, the happy communications and sweet familiarity of the Eternal Wisdom, who delights to converse with men, are an unknown secret which they wish to treat as a fantasy. Among so many ideas formed

none for herself, none for others, differing in this from our venerable Sister Alacoque, *whose sweet and humble demeanor, arising from her conviction of her nothingness*, never censured any one, and gained all insensibly by the unction of her conversation. We take these details from the *Life of Sister de Farges*, in which we read also that she had a picture taken of Sister Margaret. There then existed at Lyons a portrait of Margaret. The zeal Sister de Farges displayed for this dear memory makes us regard her as the chief archivist of Paray-le-Monial.

* *Life of the Venerable Sister Margaret Mary, Religious of the Visitation of St. Mary*, of the monastery of Paray in Charolais, who died in the odor of sanctity in 1690. By M. John Joseph Languet, Bishop of Soissons, Member of the French Academy. Paris, 1729.

on this subject by various persons, how can I prevent the profanation of the mystery of piety which the world does not wish to relish? God knows this; and He knows, too, the use I ought to make of the contradictions I met in this matter, of which the world believes itself to be the best judge. But what matters all this to a soul that seeks truth? God knows those to whom He wishes to speak: He knows how to find them. He knows, despite all obstacles, how to convey to their hearts by our feeble language the impressions He desires to make upon them."

Thus spoke Bossuet, but the times were changed since Bossuet's day. The regency was at an end; this explains much: no species of attack was spared with regard to a work which was equally unsuited to the tastes both of philosophers and Jansenists; and the wits coming to the aid of the doctors, it was soon decided in a certain circle that this *Life* was but a tissue of reveries, chimeras, offensive puerilities, and the most scandalous errors and heresies. The *Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques*, the most violent organ of the Jansenist sect, fully sustained its reputation on this occasion. Meantime, Bishop Languet was promoted to the Archepiscopal See of Sens. He was not slow to perceive that one of his suffragans, Caylus, Bishop of Auxerre, stretched out a helping hand to its traducers, and permitted the publication of a certain *Letter to a Friend*, in which the author of the *Life of Margaret Mary* was roughly handled. The Archbishop seized the pen, not for his own defense, but to avenge the memory of the illustrious virgin, whose honor was far dearer to him than his own. "What shall I say," replied he to the Bishop of Auxerre, "to such outrageous invectives? Nothing. My part is to suffer, to groan, to be silent, after the example of Jesus Christ, mute amid the priests of the synagogue. This is what the Servant of God,

whose Life I have written, teaches me by her example; her pacific silence in the midst of insults is for me a lesson and a salutary example. Often did Jesus Christ prescribe to her this patience, this silence under all painful circumstances, and it was by practicing this with an admirable obedience that she attracted to herself the graces with which she was favored: this alone would suffice to show that her visions were not, as you say, often impious and always extravagant. As for me, I deem myself happy to share the bad treatment she received during her life, and am willing that the historian of this virtuous Sister may be a participator in her sufferings. May I also have some part in her fervor, her tenderness, and, if I dare say so, in the excess of her love for God!"

It was precisely this excess of love that scandalized the Bishop of Auxerre, unhappily imbued with the gloomy spirituality of Port Royal. He thought the favors of God toward His servant *indelicate*, and could not suffer the *amorous colloquies* of the faithful spouse with the Celestial Bridegroom. "O my God!" cries out the Archbishop of Sens, "is it possible that they can misconstrue to such an extent the sweetness and the force of Thy love, a love which Thy Gospel calls *an excess, an excess of love!* It would be easy to give you a hundred texts from the Holy Fathers which would confound your critique, *indecent* itself in a Bishop. St. Austin reproaches Adimantus with his ignorance, because this Manichean was scandalized at the term *jealous love* which God has for us, according to the Scripture. '*He does not understand*,' says St. Austin, '*that all our hope of salvation is in this jealousy of God.*' And what, my Lord," pursues he, "*you are a master in Israel and you are ignorant of these mysteries*, and the *amorous colloquies* of a soul holily taken captive by love for her God.

A God jealous of the purity of His spouse scandalizes you! Have you never, then, read the spiritual works of St. Austin, or the sermons of St. Bernard—the writings of St. Teresa, of St. Francis de Sales, of so many others? Have you never read the *Canticle of Canticles*, the original of all that the Fathers and the Saints have said to express, feebly indeed, the infinite goodness of God for us, and the holy impassioned returns of the soul who, under the name of spouse, feels all the tenderness which this title exacts, and of which it is the symbol?"

St. Bernard has expressed all this in one word: "*The language of the lover is barbarous to him who does not love.*" This sect that spoke so much of the love of God, exaggerating its precept, had not the least real comprehension of it, and rejected with disdain its sweetest mysteries.

Behold how the Jansenists received the life and revelations of Margaret Mary. What, then, could be expected from philosophers and wits? Among these the clamor was universal, the ridicule unrestrained and most merciless. We find some echo of this, but very much toned down, in a certain *Eulogy* which was pronounced after the death of the biographer of Blessed Margaret, at the French Academy, of which he was a member. The secretary, whose office it was to deliver this eulogy, was called *D'Alembert;* what a panegyrist for an ecclesiastic, and one of such a character as the Archbishop of Sens! D'Alembert, who knew his business, was polite; but under the forced language of the official panegyric, he cleverly insinuated a great deal of satire on the subject of theology and theologians, and did not spare even the Jansenists themselves.

In order to become more at his ease concerning the *ridiculous* Life of Margaret Mary, he thought of a very

ingenious manœuvrer, saying that this book was but the work of some priest or unknown *monk*,* and that their deceased brother, the prelate of Sens, was perfectly innocent of writing it, though he was weak enough to attach his name to it.

As to the heroine of this history, in another age, in other circumstances, she had probably been reckoned a St. Teresa or a St. Bridget; but in the eighteenth century, alas! she was only a visionary, whose follies were shared by a Bishop. Thus spoke the eighteenth century by the voice of D'Alembert. But, thanks be to God, of so many judgments emanating from the same tribunal, and so sadly superficial when they were not the height of injustice, this is neither the first nor the last which we have seen reversed. At this moment the memory of the Blessed Margaret is avenged by the eager homages of the faithful; and who interests himself now for the memory of D'Alembert?†

*This strange assertion of D'Alembert was taken as serious, and has since found its way into biographies. After what we have quoted from the letters of the Archbishop to Sister de Farges, it seems to us that this point of literary history is beyond all discussion. This observation is the more important, as the work in question has figured largely in the cause of Blessed Margaret, in which its testimony has been regarded as irreproachable. After having closely compared it with the original documents, it is a pleasure to us to do homage to its great fidelity. Some inaccuracies of dates, involuntary and excusable, do not in any manner lessen its value.

† And does not the memory of the historian of Margaret require, too, some reparation? St. Simon, the too faithful echo of Jansenist hatred, has strangely calumniated him. But behold the testimony of another contemporary, as great a nobleman, but far more impartial one than St. Simon: "We have just learned that the Archbishop of Sens died on Friday in his diocese. His illness was short; he preached to his priests, who were in retreat, on Wednesday and Thursday. He is a great loss to the Church; never was there a prelate more ardently

Despite the century and its boasted enlightenment, the hopes just realized before our eyes always lived in the hearts of the faithful companions of Margaret Mary and the faithful people who shared their confidence. In the years 1745–1746, the monastery of Paray witnessed a consoling spectacle. There being great mortality among the cattle in this country and some others, the good inhabitants of the neighboring places turned to the Heart of Jesus, imploring of His mercy the cessation of the scourge. From all parts of Burgundy, Charolais, Brionnais, and even from the surrounding provinces, especially Bourbonnais, processions might be seen wending their way to the holy tomb. The pastors headed their flocks, and having arrived at the term of their journey, celebrated Mass in the Church of the Visitation, and addressed to their parishioners the most pathetic and touching exhortations. The faith of the lowly and the humble thus made reparation for the outrages inflicted on Him by the pride of the world, and continued to proclaim aloud the sanctity of her whom the Church has just placed on our altars.

In 1786, the Religious of Paray wrote to their Sisters

devoted to his duties, or more edifying in the discharge of them. His whole time was occupied in the care of his diocese, in arrangements to form subjects capable of aiding him in this administration, in consoling the poor, instructing the people, and finally in sustaining religion by his counsels and learned writings, which will always be as monuments in the Church to testify to his zeal and capacity. Honorable in his expenditures when it became him to be so, he generally lived in a simple frugal style, and though obliged to keep an equipage suitable to his rank, he led an apostolic life. There remained with him at the hour of death only forty-six livres ten sous and this he ordered to be sent to the hospital."—*Memoirs of the Duke de Luynes*, published by M Dussieux, &c. (Cited by M. La Vallée in his Preface to the *Memoirs of Madame de Maintenon.*)

in other monasteries: "We have the consolation to see the devotion to the Sacred Heart greatly honored in our town. There are always a great number of communions in our church on the day of its Feast. The recourse to our venerable Sister, M. Alacoque, is frequent. Linens are incessantly sent to be touched to her relics. This holy maiden seems, in imitation of our Divine Master, to prefer the little to the great, if we may judge by the cures she obtains in favor of the former."

This year, 1786, was, if I may say so, the centenary of the reign of the Heart of Jesus, dating from its full triumph at Paray, June 21, 1686. The anniversary was celebrated with great pomp. The Holy Sacrament was exposed all day, and the entire community rendered thanks to Our Lord, on its own part and on part of the Visitation Order, for the inestimable gift of His Sacred Heart. After Benediction, a procession went toward the chapel in the garden, singing the Litany of the Most Sacred Heart. There, under two credence tables, to the right and left, reposed the precious remains of the Servant of God and those of the venerated Father de la Colombière, her holy Director, above which were their respective portraits in rude fresco on the side walls.*

"It was not without emotion," says the pious narrator, "that we saw the bones of this holy Religious in the place where our ancient Sisters told us she had spent three hours in prayer after the blessing of this chapel."

The whole Order united with Paray to offer to the Heart of Jesus solemn thanksgivings; and not without reason, for if they had received abundant benedictions

* These pictures disappeared in 1830, alas! under yellow plaster. The nuns followed but too faithfully the suggestions of some worthy priests, who were, in the matter of restorations, in advance of their time.

from heaven, they had also escaped immense perils. The *strange spirit* the blessed Father had designated to his holy daughter, as a perpetual danger for the Institute, made incredible efforts to gain access to the Visitation Order, and if it had succeeded, the inevitable ruin of that Order had been the result.

At Angers the monastery was invaded, so to say, by live force. The Bishop, Henry Arnauld, came in person to insist on the election of a Jansenist Superior, who had been deposed because of her bad administration. What could the poor Sisters do against the will of their own legitimate pastor? Mother Mary Constance having been appointed conformably to the desires of the prelate, the works of the doctors of Port Royal were received in the community, and their principles, as regards the Sacraments, rigorously applied. The poor Sisters who remained faithful were severely persecuted. In 1672, Arnauld and Nicole came alternately to encourage the Sisters to adopt the Jansenist views. From the quiet of her parlor, Mary Constance, who was a woman of great spirit, governed the diocese and the bishop himself. It required nothing less than the authority of Louis XIV. to depose her anew, and to re-establish peace in the little flock she had all but ruined.

Similar examples are found now and then in the annals of the Order. That of the monastery of Castellane is celebrated: the Jansenists gloried in their triumph on this house, lorded over, too, by the Bishop; but when they saw it submit to the Holy See, they pretended it had been forced to this by violence, which assertion was utterly falsified by the most solemn and spontaneous declarations. The author of all this disturbance was the famous Bishop of Senez, Soanen, the saint, the martyr, and the confessor of the Jansenist party. Castellane

being in his diocese, he habitually resided there, and being endowed with all the virtues compatible with his astonishing obstinacy, it is not surprising that he should have led astray by his assiduity a community of which, as its Bishop, he was the first Superior, of which also he wished to be the spiritual Father, and he even condescended to become its man of business. Condemned by the Council of Embrun, it is well known that he refused to submit, and that the Abbey of Chaise-Dieu was assigned him as a retreat. The Religious of Castellane were not easily made to comprehend that they owed obedience to a Vicar-General of Arles, placed at the head of the diocese of Senez by the same authority that had deprived their late Bishop of the exercise of his functions. "We know the true shepherd," said they; "we abhor the voice of the stranger." Their door remained obstinately closed against legitimate authority. The whole Institute ceased not to bewail their resistance, and solicit for them the grace of a simple and humble submission to the Supreme Pastor, the Bishop of bishops. This favor was at length obtained (1729), God sending them a saint, Father de la Motte, the future Bishop of Amiens, so celebrated for his sacerdotal virtues and the excessive lenity of his character. They acknowledged in him another St. Francis de Sales, and the most headstrong yielded by little and little to his patience, his charity, and his unalterable meekness. A circular letter, rendered public in order to repair a public scandal, gave all France the blessed intelligence that they had returned to the sheepfold. Father de la Motte never rested till he saw them become, according to the spirit of their vocation, true Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A picture of the Sacred Heart which he had painted at Rome, and which they accepted from his

hands, was to them a sign of salvation and a pledge of their reconciliation.*

These rare defections, followed by the most consoling returns, served as a warning and an example to other monasteries exposed to the same dangers. The Daughters of St. Francis de Sales redoubled their vigilance, fervor, and fidelity to their rules, and when great trials came they were found prepared to meet them. Their constancy in their vocation, their attachment to their holy state, became admirable in the saddest and most sanguinary days of revolutionary persecution. When the representatives of power, opening the doors of their convents, said to them: "You are free!"—"Well, then," was the reply, "if this be so, respect our liberties, and begin by that which to us is the dearest of them all; allow us to fasten still more closely in our cloister the bonds which unite us to God." The agents of armed power dragged one Sister to prison for refusing to take the constitutional oath. Arrived at the foot of the tree of liberty, they said to her: "Cry out, *Long live the Republic!*" she would make only one exclamation—*Live Jesus in my heart!*

Aurillac has not forgotten Mother Nostraet, who was exposed in irons for three hours, and who next day gave to the most odious of her persecutors such touching proofs of her universal charity. The cities of Puy, Brionde, and Grasse, could tell us, in their turn, of the Mothers Mabile, Dalbine, de Chaseaux, who had the glory of being injured and insulted for the name of Jesus Christ. How many others have there been whose obscure heroism had no witnesses but God and his angels! Some leading a claustral life in the bosom of their families, going out only to relieve the unfortunate, to console

* Memoirs of M. Louis Francis Gabriel d'Orleans de la Motte, Bishop of Amiens.

the afflicted, to fortify souls who began to waver in their faith; others went through a thousand dangers to seek, far from their own country, a place in which they might be permitted to live in the practice of their holy rules. From the remains of several monasteries a little community was formed at Calatayud, in Spain. The French invasion dispersed a second time these poor inoffensive refugees. They shared all the trials, all the dangers of the faithful clergy. More than once, surprised in their poor retreat, they were preserved from certain death only by the visible protection of heaven.

The first monastery of Lyons, possessor of the heart of St. Francis de Sales, was beautifully recompensed for its filial confidence in that blessed Father. Escaping destruction by exile, the Sisters, saving their precious treasure, bore it away as a holy ark into a strange land; then, rallying around it, the dispersed Sisters met again, now in Italy, now in Germany, recipients of a generous hospitality, in localities where the blows of the Revolution were always threatening their worst, but never executed their menaces. After a sojourn at Mantua, from which they fled at the approach of the French army, after long and adventurous peregrinations through Carinthia and Styria, the pious colony of Lyons at length found a haven of repose at Venice, and the establishment they there founded, to-day most flourishing, has not yet lost the memory of its origin.

It is related that after the decree of the National Assembly deciding on the suppression of religious Orders, Roland, the future Minister of the Convention, came at the head of the municipality of Lyons, of which he was a member, knocked at the door of the monastery, and notified to the Sisters what was then called the will of the nation. He was eager to tell them they were free;

that they could leave whenever they thought fit; and to assure them also, that with great precaution he had well secured them from any unpleasantness that might otherwise result from their leaving the cloister, by remitting the vows that kept them there. All replied with one voice that they desired to die as they had lived, and to fulfill to their latest breath the sacred engagements they had contracted toward God. One Sister, it was Seraphine Marteron, made no reply: she was eighty years old, deaf, blind, and paralyzed in half her members; besides, she had been so happy in her vocation that a day scarcely ever passed in which she did not relate to the young Sisters the story of it, blessing the Divine Mercy for having chosen her for so holy a state. The Sisters were obliged to acknowledge to the municipal officers that Seraphine knew nothing of the decree of the National Assembly; that they purposely had concealed it from her, through fear of poisoning by such sad news the few days of life that remained to her, or even of hastening her death. But Roland was too good a citizen to be arrested by such scruples, and, notwithstanding the tearful instances of the Superior and the other Sisters, he insisted on going to the infirmary and making the poor invalid submit to an interrogatory on the rule, when suddenly the infirmarian, melting into tears, threw herself on her knees before him and said: "For mercy's sake, Monsieur, spare our good old Sister. Her life is in your hands; you will be her murderer if you do not grant our petition." At this he was half vanquished, and consented to deviate a little from the official forms, in order to spare the venerable Religious too strong an emotion. The Superior conducted him to the infirmary with his colleagues, and being the first to speak, said: "Behold, my dear Sister, this gentleman who comes to visit you, and who is curious to know

whether you are content and happy?"—"Yes," replied Sister Seraphine, "there is only one person with whom I am not pleased:" at this Roland thinks he is going to discover a secret. The Mother continued: "And this person, is it your Superior?" The good old Sister threw her arms about her, exclaiming: "O certainly not."—"And with whom, then, are you displeased? You must declare it to this gentleman."—"Ah! Sir," said she, "it is with myself. I have been sixty-two years in Religion, and I do not yet love God as I would wish to love Him. Ah! if the happiness of the religious life were known, no one would remain in the world: it is the greatest of all goods." Roland turned aside, and lifting up his hands, said in an audible voice: "Ah what virtue! what virtue!"

Thus were accomplished the divine promises, promises of which our Blessed Margaret was the interpreter when she said, recommending by the most urgent motives the Devotion to the Adorable Heart of Jesus: "Contrive that all religious persons may embrace it, for they will derive so much assistance from it that no other means will be ever necessary to restore the first fervor and the most exact regularity in communities the most remiss, and to bring to the height of perfection those who already live in a well-ordered convent."

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Sacred Heart a Sign to be contradicted.—Its Adorers and its Enemies.—Letters.—Confraternities erected.—The Plague at Marseilles.—The Bishop's Vow.—Anne M. Rémusat.—Her Correspondence with her Director.—Address of Belsunce to the Sailors.—The Devotion to the Sacred Heart spreads to Syria, Turkey, &c.—Anecdotes.—The exiled Queen of England asks a proper Mass and Office for the Feast of the Sacred Heart.—The Sacred Congregation of Rites gives a Negative Vote on the Question.—Brief of Clement XI. to the Sisters of Annecy.—Extract from Father Gallifet's Memoirs.—His Book.—Letter of the Bishop of Cracow to Benedict XIII.—Benedict XIV. not inimical to the Devotion to the Sacred Heart.—Explanations of Father de Gallifet.—Ribaldry of D'Alembert.—St. Alphonsus opposes one of F. Gallifet's Theories.—Mandatory Letter of the Bishop of Autun.—The New Pharisees.—The *Alacoquists* and the *Cordicoles*.—The Churchwardens of St. Andrew's.—Bossuet reprehends the Severity of the Jansenists.—The Synod of Pistoia.—Bishop Ricci.—His narrow Spirituality.—The Supporters of the Holy See and the Schismatics.—The Bull *Auctorem Fidei*.—Christ came not to send Peace but the Sword.—The modern Maccabees.—New Societies.—The Ladies of the Sacred Heart.

In the course of the year 1688, on the Feast of the Visitation, Blessed Margaret, rapt in a profound recollection, saw in the distance the benedictions to result from the mission confided to her, and the favors reserved for those whom Our Lord called to be her colleagues in the promotion of His great design of mercy and love.

In a vast and ravishingly beautiful place, she perceived a throne all encircled with flames, on which reposed the

Amiable Heart of Jesus, radiating from the wound in His Sacred side rays which lit up and heated the whole surrounding space. On one side was the Blessed Virgin, between St. Francis de Sales and Father de la Colombière; on the other were the Daughters of the Visitation, with their good angels, each holding a heart in her hand.

The Holy Virgin invited her Daughter to approach, designing, as she said, to render them depositaries of the treasure which the Son of Justice formed for Himself of the virginal blood of her Heart; a treasure which men despise or ignore, because it appears to them shrouded with the vile clay of sinful mortality. Hence, far from seeking to enrich themselves with this gift, they would gladly annihilate it. But God in His mercy has made their malice turn to their advantage; so much so that under their blows it became a coin of inestimable value, marked with the seal of the Divinity, with which they could negotiate the great affair of salvation, and purchase it.

This Mother of goodness, continuing to address her daughters, said, showing them this Divine Heart: "Here is the treasure particularly manifested to you, because of the great love my Son bears your Institute, which He regards as the Benjamin of His affections. Therefore He bestows it on you by preference, not only for yourselves, but also to share it abundantly with all, not fearing that you will thereby impoverish yourself, for the more you draw from it the more you will find to draw." Then turning to Father de la Colombière, she thus addressed him: "And you, my faithful servant, shall also share this great treasure; for if it be given to the Daughters of the Visitation to make it known and loved, and make others partakers in it, it is reserved to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus to make it known and valued, that each

may profit by receiving it with the gratitude and reverence due to so great a benefit. And, in proportion as they fulfil this office, the Divine Heart, fruitful source of benedictions, will bless so abundantly the labors of their ministry, that they will produce effects beyond their works and their hopes, all conducive to the salvation and perfection of each of them in particular."

After this the holy Founder, in his turn, spoke thus to his children: "O Daughters of good odor, come draw from the source of benediction the waters of salvation, a little of which have already flowed on your souls by the stream of the Constitutions which issued from that Heart."

He explained that they would find in this Divine Heart an easy and sure means of acquitting themselves of what is enjoined in the first article of their Directory, the abridgment of all the perfection of their Institute: "Let their whole life and exercise be to unite themselves to God." "Let this Divine Heart, then, be the life that animates them, and its love their continual exercise, since this alone can unite them to God, to aid by prayer and good example the Holy Church and the salvation of sou's." "Let them pray in the Heart of Jesus, who wishes to render Himself anew the mediator between God and man. Let their good example be to live conformably to the holy maxims and virtues of this Divine Heart, and in order to aid the salvation of their neighbor, let them propagate this Devotion. Let them strive to spread the good odor of the Heart of Jesus in the hearts of the faithful, that they may be the joy and the crown of this Amiable Heart."

Another time, Margaret saw a beautiful tree spreading its roots into the bosom of the Visitation, in which it had been eternally destined to grow, and covering with its branches all the monasteries. The Sisters, gathering the

fruits, ate of them and distributed them to all others. This was another symbol of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*

These mysterious visions received their full accomplishment after the death of the Servant of God. Soon we see the work of the Lord propagated with incredible benedictions by the instruments He Himself had chosen for that purpose.

The enthusiasm was universal in this Institute to consecrate itself to the Heart of Jesus and procure Him adorers. On all sides altars were raised in His honor, confraternities were erected, first under the authority of the Ordinaries, then with the approbation of the Holy See: the Popes, Innocent XII., Clement XI., Benedict XIII., enriched the devotion with great privileges and precious indulgences. The Feast of the Sacred Heart began to be celebrated on the day marked out by Our Lord. the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi. From Dijon, where it was established in 1686, it passed to Mons in Hainault, to Aix, in Provence, 1693; to Bordeaux, Brioude, Marseilles, 1699; and to many other

* Letter to Mother de Saumaise, June, 1689. The following passage refers to the Society of Jesus:—

"Good Father de la Colombière has obtained that the holy Company of Jesus will be gratified after our dear Institute, with all the special graces and privileges of Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ: promising that He would shed abundantly His holy benedictions on the labors of their charity and on the souls they attract. And this Divine Heart has, it seems to me, such an ardent desire to be known, loved, and adored, particularly by these good Fathers, that it promises, if I be not deceived, to spread such unction of its ardent charity on their words, that they shall be as two-edged swords to penetrate the hardened hearts of the most obstinate sinners, and draw from them tears of penitence to purify and sanctify their souls. But in order to be thus successful, they must seek all their lights in the inexhaustible source of all the science of the saints."

parts of France and beyond it, before the close of the seventeenth century. Remarkable fact: the Bishop of Autun, solicited by five convents at once, did not grant permission to have this feast kept with the Mass and proper Offices till the year 1715, thus verifying, contrary to all expectation, a prediction of Margaret's, who asserted that the Festival of the Sacred Heart would be established all over France, before its authorization in the diocese which gave birth to the Devotion.

So in twenty years the worship of the Sacred Heart spread from monastery to monastery, from confraternity to confraternity; penetrating even to the country and the village churches, it had made a tour of France. God reserved for it other increases: He made extraordinary and manifestly providential events contribute to it. Who is ignorant of the memorable circumstances which caused this blessed Devotion to become so very popular in Marseilles and in all Provence?

It was in the midst of a furious pestilence, which cut off at a blow forty thousand inhabitants, destroying whole families; in a city horrified at the sight of its own streets and public places heavily encumbered with dead and dying, that Belsunce, that hero of Christian charity and pastoral zeal, raised his voice to exhort his people on whom the arm of God weighed so heavily, to seek refuge in the Heart of Jesus, the merciful Saviour of men. "To whom," cried he, "can we have recourse in these terrible calamities, to appease the anger of God and obtain the health we can expect only of Him, if not unto the Divine Saviour of our souls, our Mediator before the Father? He is always ready to hear us. He can, when He sees fit, put an end to the tribulation under which we groan: His goodness is a thousand times greater than our malice. He wills not the death of the sinner, but

rather his conversion and life. Prostrate then at His feet in sackcloth and ashes, let us implore His mercy, and strive, by our sincere and prompt repentance, to move to compassion His Adorable Heart, who has loved men, even ungrateful and sinful men, to such an extent that He exhausts and consumes Himself to testify His love for them. If we address ourselves to Him with hearts truly humble and contrite, expecting with confidence that He will not reject us, we shall find in this God made Man, the inexhaustible source of all graces, a prompt and secure remedy for our evils, and the end of our misfortunes. It is in His name that we must pray if we would obtain the effects of our petitions. It is in His Name, and by the power and virtue of His Holy Name that the greatest prodigies are operated."

And on the Feast of All Saints, this new St. Charles Borromeo, accompanied by the remnant of his clergy, repaired to the altar he had erected in the square, barefooted, a rope around his neck, the cross between his shoulders. There in the name of all, amid a silence interrupted only by groans and piteous calls for help, he pronounced aloud, in a moving voice, the acts of reparation and consecration to the Heart of Jesus. From that moment the plague, vanquished by the power of expiation and prayer, began to decrease; and when it had ceased, the voice of the sheep united with that of the Shepherd to repeat: "Happy, a thousand times happy, the people who, by their separation from profane novelties, by their inviolable attachment to ancient and ever holy doctrine, by their humble and entire submission to all the decisions of the Church, the Spouse of Jesus Christ, by the regularity and sanctity of their lives, will be found according to the Heart of Jesus, and whose names are written in that Adorable Heart! He will be

their guide through the dangerous paths of this world, their consolation in their misery, their haven in persecutions, their defender from the gates of hell, and their names will never be effaced from the Book of Life."*

A new apprehension of the contagion became the occasion of a great act of piety performed by the magistrates in the name of the citizens: the municipal officers made a vow to go every year, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, and communicate in the church of the chief convent of the Visitation,—to offer there a wax taper ornamented with the escutcheons of the town, and to assist on the evening of the same day at a public procession. Their faith was immediately recompensed beyond their hopes. Marseilles, since that vow, though always exposed to the terrible scourge by its commerce with the East, has never had any return of it. Nor is it unmindful of such a benefit: nothing can hinder its Catholic people from proclaiming aloud that they owe their exemption to the Heart of Jesus, and they return Him every year the most solemn thanksgivings.†

Here are facts of which the whole world was witness; no one need be told of them. But what is commonly ignored is, that the great inspiration of faith and charity of Belsunce was powerfully sustained by the extraordinary lights of a humble Sister of the Visitation, a faithful imitator of Margaret Mary, whose virtue, zeal, and supernatural gifts seemed revived in her. In the intimate communications she had with the pious prelate, Anne

* *Œuvres choisies de M. de Belsunce, &c.*

† In 1821, a century after the deliverance, within the walls of Marseilles was erected a chapel of the Sacred Heart, to replace that which revolutionary fury had destroyed. On the first stone of the edifice was inscribed the name of Belsunce, round which were grouped the names of the magistrates that signalized themselves during the ravages of the pestilence: de Pilles, de Langeron, Estelle, &c.

Magdalen Rémusat frequently exhorted him to put his whole hope in the Adorable Heart of Jesus Christ. She was one of those Daughters of Mary whose hands are incessantly occupied in gathering the fruits of the mysterious tree planted in the gardens of the Institute to be distributed to all the faithful.* Is it not glorious for our Blessed Margaret to have thus contributed by the virtue of her example and her spirit to the salvation of this good people, and the ardor of its loving gratitude toward Our Lord.

After these events, the Feast of the Sacred Heart was placed among the most solemn festivals, not only in the diocese of Marseilles, but also in those of Aix, Arles and Toulon, which having experienced some attacks of the contagion, recurred, and not in vain, to the Heart of Jesus. The same measure was adopted at Autun, Jan. 26, 1721; it had been in force at Lyons since the year 1718. The example of these ancient and illustrious churches could not fail to inflame the rest of France.

* On Oct. 17, 1713, the anniversary of the death of Margaret, Our Lord made known to Sister Anne Magdalen Rémusat: "That she was destined to replace that generous and zealous soul, and to teach the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales that as it is among them He has chosen the virtuous Sisters whom he has charged with the care of His glory, so they all ought to regard themselves as Daughters of His Heart, specially bound to spread everywhere devotion to it." She wrote to her Director, Oct. 14, 1721: "Next Friday, the anniversary of the death of our Sister Alacoque, it will be eight years since Our Lord made known to me in a special and extraordinary way His designs on me regarding the glory of His Adorable Heart. I hope one day to speak to you on the subject. If you receive this letter before Friday, you will oblige me by not forgetting at the altar to return thanks for it." Such was the intimate and, so to say, family veneration paid to Margaret Mary in the Visitation Order long before she was placed by the Holy See in the category of the Blessed.—See *Life of our honored Sister Anne Magdalen Rémusat*, &c. 1 vol. 18mo. Marseilles: 1760

In his letter of thanksgiving, dated September 26, 1721, Belsunce addresses to the Marseilles navigators this touching exhortation: "And you, my very dear brothers, who go on the sea, on the breadth of the waves, publish His praises from one end of the earth to the other; announce to all nations, even the most savage, the glory, power, and infinite mercy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which has just wrought such wonders in our favor, and made joy at length succeed to the long calamities we suffered." It cannot be imagined that the holy Bishop had no other end in view in these words than to add by a grand image to the majesty of his discourse. No, he was occupied with graver thoughts, thoughts more worthy of his apostolic zeal. He knew that Marseilles was called by its commerce to develop in the East, in presence of Mussulman infidelity, all the living power of Christianity. And in fact this Catholic city, of beautiful origin, a Greek colony evangelized by him *whom Jesus loved*,* did not prove itself unworthy of such a vocation. It was not long till it saw its rough sailors carry to the shores they frequented, with the light of the Gospel, the knowledge and love of the Heart of Jesus. In 1733, a confraternity of the Sacred Heart was erected at Constantinople in the faubourg of Galata; its seat was the Church of St. Paul, belonging to the friars preachers, and it is probable enough that it is composed chiefly of Marseillais traders brought by their business into the territory of the Sublime Porte. This apostolate diffused itself in the whole basin of the Mediterranean: the church of the Jesuits at Antoura, in Libanus, 1726; that of the Capuchines at Aleppo, 1740; that of the Maronites at Damas, 1730,

* Now Jesus loved Martha and her Sister Mary and LAZARUS.—John xi. 5. And the Jews said to each other: Behold how He loved HIM. —*Ibid.* 36.

rallied under the banner of the Heart of Jesus; the Christians of various rites who divide Syria did the same, and for the glory of this Divine Heart we will add, that it operated prodigies of grace and salvation in these countries reputed barbarous. What proves this is, that after the great ravages the Revolution made in missions once so flourishing, the evangelical workmen sent there after a dearth of thirty years found it easy to revive the flame which still sparkled. One of these, Father Riccadona, S. J., received at Rome in 1831 an order to go to Syria. Before he set out, he cast himself at the feet of Gregory XVI. and asked his advice: the common Father of the faithful replied: "Spread the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus." The missionary asked nothing better, and during the thirty-two years of apostleship he spent putting in practice the lesson of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, he gathered prodigious fruits.

To day, the traveler who crosses the vast plains of Cœlo-Syria from Great Hermon to Balbec admires everywhere on his route an exuberance of Christian life, which is the more delightful in proportion as one does not expect to meet it in these barbarous regions. He learns that it is the mission of the Sacred Heart. In many villages he will see poor Arab maidens who have become Spouses of the Lord by the vow of virginity, and servants of all by their engagements to consecrate their lives to the exercise of charity and zeal. They train up young girls in the fear of God, and purify the domestic hearth of the manners of Islamism. Their house is a mean cabin, their bed a simple mat, and they receive their daily bread from the generosity, often forgetful, of the rustic aristocracy of the country. But these sacrifices are as nothing to them provided they gain souls to Jesus Christ. Ask their name and they will tell you that they

are *Arabian Sisters of the Sacred Heart.* It is in the Life of Margaret Mary, translated into Arabic toward the middle of the last century, that they have learned the secrets of the Heart of Jesus.*

Last year (1864) a French priest, an apostle of Catholic charity, being at Zahleh on the vigil of the Feast of the Sacred Heart, witnessed a pious contest between the Greek and Maronite priests of the town. Both wished to take part not only as assistants but as celebrants at the grand solemnity of the morrow. How the affair was settled, matters little to us. But our countryman having asked these good priests why they were so anxious to figure on this Feast, the answer was: "Ah! it is not a point of honor: no; since *Bouna Boulas*† has preached the Devotion to the Sacred Heart amongst us, since Zahleh has become the city of the Sacred Heart, we have seen surprising conversions, and we hope to see more, please God; and that is why we are both so eager to maintain our dignitv on this feast."

* On learning that the *Life* of our Blessed Sister had been translated into Arabic by a learned missionary of the Society of Jesus, D'Alembert could not help feeling a certain spite, and he added to his *Eulogy* of M. Languet the following note: "Would it be believed that Father Fromage, a Jesuit well versed in the Arab tongue, has taken the ridiculous trouble of translating into that language the *Life of Mary Alacoque,* and got it printed at Antoura. a city of Anti-Libanus, for the instruction of the oriental Christians? Poor Christians, you will be well instructed indeed! And you, poor authors, who now imagine your works to be wonderful, if they have the honor to be translated into English or German, what will you say to the Arab translation of *Mary Alacoque!*" Poor D'Alembert, who has not enjoyed the same honors! But in good faith, if some one had taken the trouble to translate into Arabic his works, philosophical or others, does any person imagine that the oriental Christians would be the gainers thereby?

† Father Paul, Arabic name of Father P. P. Riccadona.

Upon this the witness of this edifying scene made the following reflection: "Thus is daily verified the word of Our Lord when he promised our Blessed Margaret Mary to grant to the priests who should honor the Sacred Heart a special grace to reanimate the hardest hearts."

The extreme East did not receive with less eagerness than the Levant this blessed Devotion, and even China was in advance of Turkey and Syria, for from the year 1709 we find two confraternities of the Sacred Heart were established, one at Macao, the other at Pekin in the Church of the Jesuits, and a third was founded in 1745 within the precincts of the imperial palace. Numerous letters of missionaries of last century attest that the faith and the piety of the Christians of the Celestial Empire were powerfully excited by the contemplation of this Adorable Heart which has suffered so much for love of us.

Could the Heart of Jesus, despite the terrible barriers opposed by persecution to the zeal of the missionaries, make itself known in the Islands of Japan, and gain adorers in families who had not lost all remembrance of the apostolate of Xavier? It would be difficult to ascertain this in the present state of things. However the case may be, it is beyond doubt that He would have found there, as well as elsewhere, more than one heart disposed to respond to His call. I desire no other proof of this than what a pious author relates, from whom I cannot help gathering a touching trait: "The Ecclesiastical History of Japan recounts that at Fitae, a city in the kingdom of Bungo, a young child, still a pagan, aged only eight years, but endowed with a gentle and noble disposition, one day addressed himself to the Catechist in the church, and asked for the image of Him who had been crucified for the salvation of men. The Catechist gave

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him a crucifix. The child, having looked at it for some time, remarked that he saw many wounds in the hands and feet, but that he did not perceive the wound He had received in the side after His death. One of our Fathers, overhearing this, gave the child another crucifix which happened to be on the altar, and after gazing attentively at it, the child said that it was much more pleasing than the other, on account of the wound in the side, and having contemplated it for a long time, he asked for Baptism."*

This wound in the side, this loving wound which discovers the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is that on which it was Margaret Mary's mission to fix the attention of the whole world, in order that the world might be vanquished by their resistible power of love. What, then, is to be thought of a Devotion which becomes, wherever it appears, so popular, and which speaks a language at once so eloquent and so clear,—understood at Constantinople and at Pekin, as well as at Rome and Paris? Assuredly, this Devotion is the greatest of all devotions; it is worthy of all the respect and confidence of the faithful to whom it is preached.

We will perhaps be astonished that Rome should have so long deferred to imprint its last sanction, by assigning to it its rank in the ecclesiastical liturgy. It might be answered, that Rome in her ingenious tenderness imitated in this the conduct of a mother, who willingly allows herself to be pressed by her children, well knowing that she will but inflame their desires by showing less eagerness to satisfy them. How many times has not the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, that dearest belief of all devout servants of Mary, been pressed, before it became a dogma of the Catholic Church? Was it not

* St. Jure, *Book of the Elect.*

also useful and salutary that all Christian people should be drawn of themselves toward the Heart of Jesus, which attracts them by the sole force of love, before the Church gave them a law to honor it with a special worship? For the rest, the Sovereign Pontiffs left no doubt as to the legitimacy of this Devotion when they authorized the faithful to practise it in confraternities, to which they accorded ample indulgences. Still, the time had not yet come to approve a Mass and proper Offices in honor of the Sacred Heart. One demand to this effect having been addressed to the Holy See by Mary of Modena, Queen of England, the question was referred to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, which vetoed it, March 30, 1697. All that was permitted was to celebrate on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi the Mass of the Five Wounds of Our Lord, which already figured in the Supplement to the Roman Missal; thereby rendering an implicit worship to the Adorable Heart that was wounded for love of us.

Some years after, the convent of Annecy, in the name of the whole Order, petitioned the same favor from Pope Clement XI. The Holy Father replied by a brief (June 4, 1704), in which he eulogizes the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus, but avoids pronouncing on the question of the Mass and Office, which he submits to the examination of the Sacred Congregation. Behold the tenor of this brief:—

"You do wisely and piously, dear daughters in Christ Jesus, in submitting the success of your wishes and your solicitude for the establishment of this Devotion to the will of God, and tranquilly awaiting the decision of the Church, which is in reality to go directly and by the shortest road to the Heart of Our Lord. Truly, the faithful soul could not render a more pleasing duty to

the heavenly Spouse, who, to show by a mystical expression that the beloved has found favor with Him through a simple and humble glance of her understanding, and by the docility of her mind and will, says to her in the Holy Scripture: *Thou hast wounded My Heart, My Sister, My Spouse, by one of thy looks and one of thy hairs.* It was in this way, too, that the Prophet merited the benediction of God, who said: *I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do all my wills.* We have thought proper to say this to you in approval of your piety and obedience, our well beloved Daughters in Jesus Christ, upon whom we implore the effusion of the celestial dew of grace, for which purpose we heartily give you our apostolic benediction. Given at Rome," &c.

Things were in this state when a disciple of Father de la Colombière, like him all devoted to the Heart of Jesus, resolved to present himself before the Holy See as the interpreter of the wishes of Christendom, in order to obtain that this Divine Heart, conformably to the desires expressed to Margaret Mary, should be honored in the whole universe by a special and solemn worship.

The vocation of Father de Gallifet to this holy enterprise is too remarkable to be passed over in silence; we shall therefore place it before our readers in his own words:—

"In the year 1680, on leaving the novitiate, I had the happiness to fall under the spiritual direction of Father de la Colombière, the Director God gave to Margaret Mary, who was still living. It is from this holy man that I received the first instructions concerning the Heart of Jesus Christ, and I began at once to love and esteem this Devotion. At the end of my theological course, I was sent to the house of St. Joseph to make my third year of novitiate,

according to the rules of our Society. There, in serving the sick, I fell ill of a fever, which brought me to death's door in a few days. I was given over by the physicians, and on the sixth or seventh day they judged my death so certain and so near, that, fearing there would not be time to administer Extreme Unction, they would not wait for the holy oils till the Sacristan who had gone for them returned, but ran precipitately to the nearest monastery to get them. A few hours after, I lost all consciousness; I fell into my agony, and it was thought that every moment would be my last. My life thus despaired of, one of my friends, whom we regarded as a saint,* felt inspired to go before the Blessed Sacrament, and make a vow for my restoration. He promised Jesus Christ that if He would be pleased to preserve my life, I should employ it entirely for the glory of His Sacred Heart. His prayer was heard; I was cured, to the great amazement of the physicians. I knew nothing of the vow to which I owed my recovery, but when I was out of danger it was given me in writing. I ratified it with all my heart, regarding myself henceforth as a man devoted by the marked choice of Providence to the Adorable Heart of my Divine Master. All that regarded its glory became precious to me, and I made it the object of my zeal and labors."

At this period, Father Gallifet was not aware that Blessed Margaret Mary had written a memoir of her own life. It was some time after her precious death that he was informed of its existence. He was very anxious to see it; and the Sisters of the first monastery of Lyons having asked it for him from their Sisters at Paray, the original, written by the hand of the Servant of God, was

* Was it not perhaps Father Rollin? His reputation for sanctity and devotion to the Sacred Heart would seem to authorize this conjecture.

sent him. The reading of this was a source of immense consolation to him, and made on him holy impressions that he never forgot. Convinced that others would read it with the same blessed results, he ardently desired to disseminate this writing, but he had not the means of doing so till Providence opened to him a way which he had never dreamt of. In 1725, he was called to Rome by the General of his Order, to fulfill there the important employment of assistant of France. "This post," says he, "appeared too much for me, and the consciousness of my own weakness made me hesitate about accepting it. I was sustained by another sentiment, namely, that God willed this of me, and that He would bring me to Rome to spread the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus our Redeemer."

There, in effect, after the accomplishment of the duties of his office, this was his great and principal occupation, as is proved by the letters he sent to the Bishop of Soissons, Margaret Mary's biographer, and the labors he undertook for this object. His first care was to write in favor of this Devotion a dogmatic treatise in Latin, which he dedicated with most willing permission to Benedict XIII., the reigning Pontiff. The work appeared in 1726; it issued from the press of the Vatican with the most imposing approbations.*

The author had at heart to prove that the Devotion to

* Besides the approbation of the Master of the Sacred Palace, Father Gallifet's work contains those of V. R. F. Michael Angelo Tamburini, General of the Society of Jesus; V. R. F. Bernardine Membrine, of the Order of St. Dominic, Preacher to His Catholic Majesty, &c.; V. R. F. Marius Maccabei, Procurator-General of the Barnabites, Consultor of the Congregations of the Index and Rites, &c. These various approbations are remarkably motived, and couched in the strongest and most explicit terms.

the Sacred Heart of Jesus was not new in the Church; that the same spirit which revealed itself in the writings of Margaret Mary had deposited its germs in many privileged souls; that it was sufficiently authorized by the examples and practice of the saints,—of a St. Bernard, a St. Bonaventure, a St. Laurence Justinian, and the two illustrious virgins, St. Gertrude and St. Mechtildis. He demonstrated the solidity of this Devotion on the surest and most universally admitted principles of theology; he unfolded its admirable progress since the revelations of Margaret Mary. Finally, he laid at the feet of the common Father of the Faithful the desires of the whole Visitation Order, of a great number of bishops and several Christian princes, and solicited the establishment of the Feast of the Sacred Heart, with Mass and proper Office, not merely in some Orders or some dioceses, but in the whole Catholic universe.*

The question was again submitted to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, who once more gave a negative vote on it. The motives of this decision will be found in the great work of Benedict XIV. (then Mgr. Prosper Lambertini), who fulfilled in this venerable assembly the functions of Promoter of the Faith.†

* Several bishops, Belsunce among others, solicited this favor only for their respective dioceses. But Constantine Szaniawski, Bishop of Cracow, finishes his letter to Benedict XIII. with these words: "Fovebit autem et magis excitabit (piorum desideria), si, ex sua Pastorali benignitate et Apostolical Potestatis plenitudine, ad vota expectandis populi, Festum Sanctissimi Cordis Jesu, cum officio proprio, et Missa *pro universali Ecclesia*, instituere decreverit."

† It is remarkable that in the course of this discussion (*De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et Beatorum Canonizatione*, lib. iv. part ii. cap. xxxi. &c.), the most illustrious author, so exact on this point, and in a book in which he has laid down the rules of it with so great care, constantly gives to Margaret Mary the title of *Venerable*, which had not yet been

When he quitted Rome, after a sojourn of eight years, Father Gallifet had the consolation of leaving there a confraternity of the Sacred Heart, the seat of which was the Church of St. Theodore, *in Campo Vaccino*, and which was soon after erected into an arch-confraternity (1732). In France, he continued to labor with indefatigable zeal for the success of the cause to which he had devoted his time and his strength. He again took the pen to translate his work into French, to perfect it, to complete it; and while leaving full scope for dogmatic

decreed her by the Church. This oversight, if it be one, is, to say the least, very singular. The advocate of the cause thought it could be only the effect produced by the reputation for sanctity of Blessed Margaret, and it is prevalent in one of the memorials presented to the Congregation of Rites. Several writers have chosen to see in Benedict the Fourteenth a systematic adversary of Devotion to the Sacred Heart. This is a manifest error. As Pope, he encouraged it more than any of his predecessors, there being issued during his Pontificate four hundred and twenty-two briefs for the erection of new confraternities. As to the opinion officially sustained by Mgr. Lambertini, as promoter of the faith, that is of little consequence to the Devotion. But we are certain that he was favorable to the cause, and even associated himself with Father Gallifet to prepare the way for its success. This is attested, in terms not equivocal, by a letter of the Father to the Bishop of Soissons:—

"My Lord, I shall have the honor to render to your lordship an account of the state of the matter regarding the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. The promoter of the faith (Mgr. Lambertini, Bishop of Ancona, and who is to be Cardinal at the first promotion) has given the writing he had prepared in order to advance the object. But it is his duty *to impugn it*, and to deal beforehand with all the difficulties that can be raised against it. This writing has been given me by the promoter himself (who is otherwise favorable), to be answered. We are at work preparing the answers (which will be ready, I hope, by May); the objections and the responses will be printed and distributed, and the affair will be repeated to the Congregation," &c.—[Letter of April 24, 1727: Archives of Paray.]

theology, he rendered it precious to piety. At each edition he had the happiness to register new successes of the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus. That of 1745,* shows the number of confraternities erected up to the fourth of May that year to be seven hundred and two. The pious author demonstrates by authentic documents that the worship of the Heart of Jesus is spread through nearly all the provinces of Italy, France, Germany, &c.; that it has reached the ends of the earth,—China, the Indies, &c.; that it has been received and approved by bishops in all Christendom; by religious orders of men and women; finally, that the Feast of the Sacred Heart is demanded of the Holy See by Philip V. of Spain, by Augustus of Poland, by the Bishops of Cracow and Marseilles, and by several other bishops of Spain, &c. He concludes in these terms:—

"From all this appears the truth of what we have demonstrated in our work, namely, that the worship of the Heart of Jesus is holy, and that a contrary opinion cannot be maintained without injury to religion. This consent of so many churches is in itself a solid answer to all that may be urged against the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus. And if any one be found to raise objections, we shall content ourselves with showing him the list we have just given, with this short reflection: 'It is impossible that so great a portion of the Church should embrace a superstitious worship, with the consent of the chief Christian Bishops and of the Holy See itself. Now it clearly appears by this catalogue that the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus has been embraced by a great part of the Church, with the consent and approbation of the principal prelates of the Christian world, and that the

* *Excellence of Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.* Nancy, chez la Veuve Baltasar. 1745, 2 vols. in 4to.

Holy See itself has favored it with more than seven hundred briefs of indulgences.' By this short, simple, and clear response, the solidity of which can be comprehended even by children, we drive back, as with an invincible shield, all the arrows that can be aimed against this sacred worship."

Arrived at this point, the cause was gained; the rest was only a matter of time, and the decree, solicited with such pressing instances, could not fail to be obtained, sooner or later.

Another eminent service was rendered by Father Gallifet to the Devotion of which he was the apostle and the defender; we owe to him the first edition of Blessed Margaret's Memoir of her own life. The Bishop of Soissons, ever preoccupied with the attacks of the incredulous, and fearful of the abuse the malignity of the age might make of certain passages, was of opinion that this publication would not aid the cause.* No such fears were shared by Father Gallifet, who was singularly struck by the assurances given by Our Lord to His Servant: "That He would be glorified by this writing; that He willed that the graces with which He was pleased to enrich her soul should not be hidden; that He would shed on this writing the unction of His grace; that He would make use of it for the good of souls, and to draw many from perdition."†

* He wrote to Mother Elizabeth de la Garde, then Superior of Paray: "With regard to the *Life* of this Sister, written by herself, I advise you not to send it to Rome. There is something in it which would not please, and I counsel you never to disseminate the work. The extracts I have made from it in my book are quite sufficient." April 4 (year not given).

† This writing and all others from the pen of Blessed Margaret have since received the highest approbation. During the process of beati-

Consequently, during his sojourn at Rome he procured an authentic copy of the Memoir, and had a faithful translation of it made under his own eyes, and the censors having found nothing reprehensible in it, it appeared with his work under the auspices of Pope Benedict XIII. But in France the work encountered much more difficulty. The royal censor presented to the editor a certain number of objections, to which the latter responded in an apologetic preface, which he added to the Memoir.*

fication, they were all submitted to the examination of a theologian nominated by Cardinal de Somaglia, reporter of the cause, and his Eminence having made his report on each of them, the Sacred Congregation declared that nothing in them deserved theological censure. Decree of Sept. 22,1827.

* One of Father Gallifet's answers may, perhaps, have some special interest for our readers, and we therefore impose it as a duty on ourself to place it before them: "We shall make here an important observation; it is, that the apparitions and words with which God favors these chosen souls are not always external, but often intellectual. The words they hear are interior, and strike not the ear of the body. The impression is made in the soul. The depth of God's communications is from Himself alone; the manner of expressing it is from the creature; and this manner varies according to the different characters of the persons inspired. From this arises the diversity of style, the difference of expressions, and the peculiarities we observe in sacred writers. It is thus the prophets have transmitted to us the words of God, sometimes clothed in grandeur and magnificence, sometimes in a popular and simple style: God suggesting to them the truths He wills them to announce, and they expressing them in their own manner—now as an Isaiah bred among the great, and again as an Amos bred by shepherds. If this be applied to the Memoirs of Margaret Mary, all difficulties will disappear. What appears mean and puerile in the expression (to some critics) could not be attributed to Jesus Christ, but to the simplicity of the Religious whom he made speak," &c. D'Alembert believed himself to be very witty when he said of Margaret Mary, that Jesus Christ *poussait la galanterie Jusqu'à faire des vers pour elle.*

A name dear to Christian piety ought to find a place in these pages. The great love of St. Alphonsus Liguori for the God of Calvary and of the Eucharist, would not permit him to be indifferent to a thing which so nearly concerned His glory. In the year 1758, he published a novena in honor of the Heart of Jesus.* In the short but most substantial notice that precedes the exercises for every day, he recalls the efforts of Father Gallifet before the Congregation of Rites, the little success the petition met with, the reasons which caused it to be rejected; then he gives it to be clearly understood that the cause has not yet terminated, and that he himself is full of hope. In fact, the hour was near when the desires of the adorers of the Sacred Heart were to be gratified to the utmost.

Pope Clement XIII., who succeeded Benedict XIV., ordered the Sacred Congregation to examine once more the question they had twice so resolutely negatived. This time the answer was favorable, and in accordance, it must be said, with the wishes of this pious Pontiff. In

The observation of Father de Gallifet, who took the trouble to study the matter, reduces to its just value this impious pleasantry. No, Our Lord did not make verses for His humble Spouse, but He *spoke to her heart*, and she herself translated these interior words into a language unstudied indeed, but sufficiently familiar to her.

* *Novena del Cuore di Gesu.* According to St. Alphonsus, Father Gallifet was wrong in founding his theological thesis in favor of the Sacred Heart on a contested opinion, namely, that the heart is the seat of the affections. Muratori sustains that the seat of them is the brain. This controversy may be seen in Benedict XIV., *loc. cit.* Modern physiology would perhaps be in favor of Father Gallifet's views and against Muratori. However this may be, we are of the same sentiments as St. Alphonsus: it suffices that the heart play a distinguished part in the functions of life, and above all that it is regarded in all nations as the most natural and popular symbol of the affective part of our soul.

1765 was published a decree which empowered the bishops of Poland and the ecclesiastics of the Roman arch-confraternity to celebrate with Mass and proper Office the Feast of the Sacred Heart. The Congregation declared that it wished by this concession "to give a new lustre to a Devotion already established, and to renew symbolically the memory of the Divine Love, by which the only Son of God clothed himself with our nature, and, becoming obedient unto death, declared that He gave us the example of *being meek and humble of heart.*

This decision, so long expected, was received with universal joy. It is true that it did not extend beyond Poland; but from all parts of the Catholic world numerous bishops solicited its extension to their dioceses. From the Church of St. Agatha of the Goths, St. Liguori successfully petitioned the Holy See for this privilege, and he celebrated the Feast of the Sacred Heart with inexpressible consolation and fervor. He composed prayers to prepare the faithful for it; during the Octave he daily addressed them moving exhortations. His words were so inflamed, that one day, on hearing him preach, one of his episcopal brethren fell on his knees, to the great emotion of the auditory. The same year was held at Paris the General Assembly of the clergy. The queen, Mary Leczinska, addressed to the bishops who attended this reunion a letter, in which she urged them to establish in their dioceses the Feast of the Sacred Heart. All acquiesced in her pious wishes, and moreover they invited their colleagues, by a circular, to follow their example. For several years, the most eloquent voices in France were alternately raised to teach the faithful the inestimable value of the treasures contained in the Adorable Heart of the Saviour Jesus. The mandatory letters

of the pious Bishop of Lodève, Henri de Fumel, and of the Bishop of Boulogne, Francis de Pressy, were eagerly read not only in France but in other countries. The Bishop of Autun, M. de Bouillé, was not oblivious of the prerogatives of his diocese, the first cradle of a Devotion that had become the common riches of all Churches. "It is," said he, "a good which belongs to us by title of inheritance, transmitted to our piety by that of our fathers. We have had the honor of being in some manner the authors of it; let us also aspire to that of being the models of it; and to the honor of having given the lesson let us also join that of giving the example, the practical illustration."

And why should it not be told? when, in 1856, the French bishops besought the Holy See to extend the decree of 1765 to the whole universe, the pious inspiration came from the diocese of Autun, and was born in the truly sacerdotal heart of the worthy successor of M. de Bouillé, the present Bishop of Autun.

But this is only the bright and consoling part of the picture, which, alas! had many shadows. How can it be forgotten that we are now traversing the second half of the eighteenth century, and advancing with rapid strides toward the revolutionary catastrophe? We will dissemble nothing, but will rather leave to history all the severity of its teachings. Yes, the meek and humble heart of Jesus was not shown to this century without exciting the same passions which the adorable Person of Our Lord excited in the bosom of the synagogue There arose violent or hypocritical opposition not only among the people, but even in the body of the clergy, and in the most eminent ranks of the hierarchy. The spontaneous enthusiasm of pious and simple souls became a source of irritation and spleen for the new Pharisees. Thus was once more accomplished the great prophecy

pronounced in the early days of Christianity, when the Virgin Mother laid her Divine Child in the arms of the holy old Man that awaited His coming: *He has been set up for the ruin and resurrection of many, and for a sign that shall be contradicted.* Yes, for the resurrection of the humble and for the ruin of the proud. Has not this Divine Saviour Himself said: *Blessed is he who shall not be scandalized in Me?* The greatest testimonies of His love become a scandal for those who will not accept the mystery of His humiliations and sufferings. The cross on which He died for our sins is a scandal. The Adorable Sacrament in which He veils not only His Humanity, but also His Divinity, a scandal. And when He shows His Divine Heart, that meek and humble Heart which can reign over us only by bruising our pride, a still greater scandal, a scandal to him who rejects, who despises so much love! Ah! how many Christians will never comprehend such language! By offering us His Heart, Jesus Christ demands ours—Any thing but that, my God! Rather ask me for all the rest. Here are my works; the perfect observance of Thy law, with penances and austerities of supererogation. Take them; be satisfied. Canst thou desire more? Yes, there then existed many Christians, exact observers of the commandments of law after the manner of the ancient Pharisees, but who comprehended not the sacrifice of love, and could not determine to make it; many of those whom the Apostle called, if we mistake not, *the prudent in Jesus Christ*, who carry their circumspection to the alliance they contract with Him, and who only accept Him, to say all in a word, when they are sure of being well recompensed for it, of losing nothing by it. These separate, and their murmurs rise against the Holy See,

and against all the faithful who submit to the empire of the Heart of Jesus Christ Our Lord.

If we took the trouble to search the Jansenist pamphlets of the time, we could gather most plenteously the injury and sarcasm daily poured forth against the *Alacoquists* and the *Cordicoles*, according to their ignoble language, and against Margaret Mary, who certainly had loved Our Lord and His Cross too much to obtain from them the respect which impiety itself does not always refuse to the humble virtues of Christian virgins. But what would the sad spectacle profit us? What we should guard against is the spirit that makes reserves with God, and sells its obedience to the Church our Mother.

Let us, however, take a passing glance at some significant facts, sufficiently characteristic of the tendency of the epoch:—

On the vigil of the Feast of the Sacred Heart, July 15, 1776, a judiciary act was served on the parish priest and curates of the parish of St. Andrew-des-Arcs, in the name of the Church-wardens of this district, to prevent the celebration of this Feast of the Sacred Heart.

Nor was this an isolated act. In 1781 we find a consultation, signed by five advocates, which decided in general that the Church-wardens are authorized, say they, in opposing the celebration of a festival which has not been admitted by any council or synod, general or diocesan!*

* But perhaps this statement will not be credited. Here, then, is the document, such as I have found it, printed at the end of one of these miserable dissertations:—

Letter to the Alacoquists, &c. 1782, *published without the name of printer.*

CASE TO BE INVESTIGATED.

'The church-wardens, being lovers of order, and consequently much

What say you to these church-wardens and these advocates? Between them and the civil constitution of the clergy there is not much difference. The constitutional Church is no more than the church-warden encroaching on the spiritual jurisdiction of the parish, and erecting himself his own pastor, his own bishop, and even his own pope.

The synod of Pistoia holds a very important place in the history of the Church; but it is always the same

pained at being desired to take part in the Cordicole Feast introduced against their will, inquire whether they have the right to oppose the Feast of the Sacred Heart which the pastor yearly celebrates in the Parish church, and whether they are not justified in refusing their services on such an occasion.

"RESOLUTION.

"The council undersigned are of opinion that the duties of the church-wardens, being fixed by laws, regulations, and local customs which contain nothing contrary to order, and which have acquired the force of a law, these gentlemen are in no sense bound to conform to the arbitrary regulations of the pastors of their respective churches. On the contrary, they should oppose them zealously if, besides the vice of innovation, there be irregularity in the rules they propose, and there is no doubt that in such a case they will be sustained, as several church-wardens have been, by equitable judges; that in the proposed case the innovation and irregularity are notorious; that the Feast of the Sacred Heart as at present in vogue has been unheard of in past centuries; that it has not been approved in any council or synod; that it is unknown in nearly all the cathedrals of the Christian world, whose rites should be as precedents for private churches; in short, that this Feast has stolen in furtively, and not come in a legal manner, according to the tastes and fancies of some particular pastors, who, in this respect, have frequently failed of being the imitators of their predecessors, nor can they be considered as models by their successors who choose to act differently.

"Given this 4th of October, 1781.

"BEAUHARNOIS, SARASIN, LOISEL, TRISTAN, LA BARDE."

spirit, the sad dismal spirit, that here affects a particular character of austerity, and amply justifies the language of Bossuet, witness of the first enterprises of the Jansenists. "Who does not see," said he, "that this rigor inflates presumption, nourishes disdain, feeds angry pride and a spirit of fantastic singularity, makes the yoke of religion appear too heavy, the Gospel excessive, and Christianity impossible?"* The theologians of Pistoia loved penance too well to permit Christians to find any consolation or sweetness in the Adorable Heart of our Saviour Jesus Christ. But the decree of the Congregation of Rites, approved by Clement XIII., put an obstacle to their censures. They then covered their attacks with the mask of hypocrisy, and pretended that the decree of 1765 authorized only the worship of the symbolical Heart of Jesus Christ, that is to say, of His love, and not of His Heart of flesh, of His material Heart: as if all the Sacred Humanity of our Lord, of which the Heart is a part, were not hypostatically united to the Person of the Word, and by that alone worthy of the worship of latria, to speak theologically. I shall not insist on this point, which has been explained by more learned pens, especially that of Cardinal Gerdil, who became on this occasion one of the apologists for the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus.† A

* Funeral Oration of Dr. Cornet.

† The defense of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart makes part of the writing entitled: *Animadversiones in Notas, quas nonnullis Pistoriensis Synodi propositionibus damnatis in Dogmatica Constitutione Sanctissimi Domini Nostri Pii VI. qual inscript:* Auctorem Fidei, Cl. Feller, clariores intelligentiæ nomine, adjiciendas curavit. Gerdil, opp. t. 14. Rome, 1809.

Feller, who, however, was not yet a Jansenist, has added with very bad taste to the bull *Auctorem Fidei*, published in Germany, some explanatory notes, which pervert the sense and weaken its power. It has since been advanced that he was not the author of these notes, but

pastoral letter on the Feast of the Sacred Heart published by the Bishop of Pistoia, Scipio Ricci, distills all the poison of the sect, disguised with much art. We remark in it these sad words: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can be the rational and legitimate object of the new Feast, does not wish us to confound the sweetness of devotion with the austerity of penance." He comprehends not, in his narrow and mutilated Christianity, that Jesus Christ is the *whole* of the Christian, and that pious souls find in His Passion and wounds more sweetness than bitterness, as is shown in every page of the writings of a St. Austin, a St. Bernard, a St. Bonaventure. "O most happy lance," cries out the last, "that has merited to make such an opening! Oh! if I had been in its place I should never wish to come out from the side of Jesus Christ. I should say: *This is the place of my repose; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.*" Wherefore should we not rejoice in this wound, whence issue the water and blood of the sacraments, and in which was formed the Church, our Mother? And how can a Christian Bishop take upon himself the odious mission of preventing the faithful *from drawing waters with joy at the fountains of the Saviour?*

No one is ignorant of the result of this new and last attack, so much the more deplorable as it was directed by the pastors placed at the head of the people to teach them the ways of salvation. A dogmatic constitution emanating from the Apostolic See and received by the universal Church avenged these outrages, and loudly justified the holy and salutary practices rashly censured by the schismatical assembly of Pistoia. The slandered

his own autograph letters, which we have seen, do not permit us to entertain the least doubt on this subject. Cardinal Gerdil, in his *Animadversiones*, refutes at the same time Feller and the doctors of Pistoia.

faithful joyfully heard the Supreme Pastor pronounce by his infallible authority that they were not in error in recurring to the Heart of Jesus, and offering it the supreme adoration due to the whole Person of the Incarnate Word.* If, ever and anon, some contradictions were raised by incorrigible sectaries, such as the unruly, fiery Gregory, constitutional Bishop of Loir-et-Cher, or the exoratorian, Tabarand, they could only lead astray consciences already rebellious to the voice of the Church, and henceforth it was easy to know which side to take, when on one hand was seen the Holy See surrounded by a Belsunce, a St. Alphonsus Liguori, a Christopher de Beaumont, &c., and on the other the Bishop of Pistoia, with his schismatical synod, the constitutional Gregory and the Jansenist Tabarand.

But I acknowledge, with bitter grief, that my heart is seized with anguish in recalling the era in which these things were accomplished. The bull *Auctorem Fidei*, the last sanction given to the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus, and the brilliant victory over its adversaries, was

* LXII. Doctrina, quæ devotionem erga Sacratissimum Cor Jesu rejicit inter devotiones quas notat velut novas erroneas, aut saltem periculosas: Intellecta de hac devotione, qualis est ab Apostolica Sede probata: Falsa, temeraria, perniciosa, piarum aurium offensiva, in Apostolicam Sedem injuriosa.

63. Item, in eo quod Cultores Cordis Jesus hoc etiam nomine arguit, quod non advertant Sacratissimam Carnem Christi, aut ejus partem aliquam, aut etiam humanitatem totam cum separatione aut præcisione a Divinitate adorari non posse cultu latriæ;

Quasi Fideles Cor Jesus adorent cum separatione, vel præcisione a Divinitate, dum illud adorant ut est Cor Jesu, Cor nempe Personæ Verbi, cui inseparabiliter unitum est, ad eum modum quo exsangue Corpus Christi in triduo mortis sine separatione, aut præcisione a Divinitate adorabile fuit in Sepulchro:

Captiosa, in Fideles Cordis Christi Cultores injuriosa.

(Bulle *Auctorem Fidei.*)

proclaimed in 1794, one of the saddest dates in our history. What gloomy and afflicting thoughts are evoked by the remembrance of contemporary events! What! will perhaps be said, the great enthusiasm of pastors and people toward the Heart of Jesus, will it not be able to soften the rigor of divine justice, and France, after having signalized herself by her zeal, will she not be able to save herself from impending dangers? Has not Our Lord promised other things to those who would be devoted to Him, and return Him love for love?

Ah! here we must weigh human destinies in the balance of the sanctuary, and generously turn our thoughts toward heaven. Assuredly, we should be cruelly deceived if He, in whom we have believed, and to whose cause we have bound ourselves, had not *the words of Eternal Life.*

To him who would put a similar question in the reign of Nero, thirty years after the death of Jesus Christ, when the witnesses of His Resurrection disappeared one by one under the heavy blows of the executioner, bequeathing to the Church the sole heritage of the bloody crown of martyrdom; to whomsoever had then asked what use the Gospel had been, or what profit, it would have been necessary to answer that the Divine Master had not promised His disciples the felicities of the present life, and that He had come on earth *not to bring peace, but the sword.*

And yet, even at the very moment in which he falls the Christian triumphs, sharing at once in the humiliations and sufferings of His God, and in His glorious immortality, which made St. Paul say: *We die, and behold we live.* How often, since her birth on Calvary, has not the Spouse of Christ experienced these astonishing alternations of life and death, of annihilations and sudden un-

hoped for resurrections? If, then, we desire to know the advantage derived from devotion to the Sacred Heart, by the generation of Christians that embraced it so ardently at the very vigil of the Revolution, we must ask at the prisons that overflowed with victims in the days of terror, victims resigned to every suffering, and who even faced death with joy. We must ask it at the scaffold bedewed with the purest blood of France; at the pontoons of Rochefort, where so many faithful priests suffered a thousand deaths before receiving the palm of martyrdom; at La Vendée, where this Divine Heart, the rallying-point of the Catholic army, shone on the breasts of the brave, the La Rochejacquelein and the Cathelineau, these modern Machabees. And if France has saved her faith from shipwreck; if on the morrow of this terrible epoch she is so eager to restore the altars of the living God, to whom does she owe these blessings if not to the merciful Heart of Jesus Christ? I call to witness this all who have known the heroic priests, the confessors of the faith, whose hands have gathered the scattered stones of the sanctuary; it is at the focus of the Heart of Jesus, which inflamed their zeal for the house of God, that they drank in this zeal, whose fecundity has consoled the Church of God as she issued from her mourning. The majority of their works, of which we are the inheritors, are born under the immediate inspiration of this Divine Heart. Religious congregations or lay associations—all are animated with the same spirit of reparation, of expiation, and of love. Instead of the serene majesty that characterizes the institutions founded in the grand ages of the Catholic faith, they have a nameless but intimate and penetrating charm, like those flowers that bloom after the season is past, contrasting the more strangely with the general decay of nature, and

rejoicing the eye beneath the pale rays of the winter sun.*

Was not this presaged to an illustrious virgin of the Order of St. Benedict, by a mysterious saying of St. John the Evangelist? And this virgin, too, though several centuries before Margaret Mary, was, like her, initiated into the secrets of the Heart of Jesus.

The remarkable prediction, which seems to apply so

* For example, the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, founded by the pious Father Caudrin and Madame Henrietta Aymer de la Chevalerie. It was not slow to establish its principal seat in the midst of the ruins of the ancient Picpus, not far from the Place of the Throne, where fell more ethan fourteen hundred heads, and on land s till reeking with the blood of victims. (See *Life of Abbé Caudrin*, &c.) The Society of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart, a valiant little troop which furnished as recruits for the restored Society of Jesus, veterans in the combats of the faith.—From this came forth Varin, Gloriot, Barat, Rozaven, and many others, whose works survive them, and whose memory is in benediction wherever they labored in the vineyard of the Lord. (See *Life of Father Varin*, &c., and *Historical Notices of some Members of the Society of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart*, &c.) The Ladies of the Sacred Heart, of whom it is superfluous to make any eulogium; every one knows with what zeal and success they consecrate themselves to the education of young persons; an immense benefit for a diseased society like ours, in which, most frequently, faith can regain its legitimate empire over souls only by the sweet and persevering influence of the Christian wife and the Christian mother. I do not forget the modest and useful foundations in which the venerated Father Picot de Clorivière took the initiative; nor the Benedictine preachers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, instituted in these latter times by R. P. Mary John Baptist Muard, of holy memory. It would take a long time to enumerate the different branches nourished by the same sap, the brooks that flow from the same source, whose waters moisten and vivify the field of the Church. Among the laic associations I will name only two, the Preparatory Communion and the Apostleship of Prayer. All this well shows the fecundity of the Sacred Heart, and our age has not certainly exhausted it.

well to our age, is mentioned in the fourth book of the *Insinuations* of St. Gertrude. It is well known that this great saint habitually made her dwelling in the Heart of Jesus, which was at once her temple and her place of repose. She received the sacred stigmata in her own heart, which was once transpierced with a fiery arrow, darted from the open side of the Saviour. Now she had the happiness, as well as Margaret Mary, of obtaining in this Adorable Heart the consolations of which it is the only source; and one day, as the beloved disciple whose feast she celebrated kept her company, she took the liberty of asking him why he had never made known to men what he experienced when he reposed on the breast of Jesus: "Because," responded St. John, "I was commissioned to instruct the growing Church in the mystery of the Word Incarnate. I reserved till these latter times the revelation of the ineffable delights which I felt when I rested on the bosom of Jesus, in order that the languor of the Church, in her old age, might be excited and awakened by the news of these incomparable sweetnesses."*

* The above passage from St. Gertrude's Life is given differently by other authors. We have translated it as it occurs in Rev. Father Daniel. Rev. F. Dalgairns translates it as follows: "I was charged to publish to the nascent Church the words of the Uncreated Word of God the Father; but as for the sweetness of the emotions of that Sacred Heart, God has reserved it to Himself to make it known in these last times, in the decrepitude of the world, in order to rekindle the flame of its charity, which will have grown cold."

This translation of the passage agrees better than the above with the French translation of the same, in Bishop Languet's *Life of Margaret Mary*, and with the Italian translation of it in the Life of St. Gertrude, by Lanspergius, lib. iv. c. 4.—[*Trans.*

CHAPTER XXX.

The Religious of Paray are driven from their Monastery.—Sister Mary Teresa Petit carries away the Bones of Blessed Margaret Mary.—They are respected, while the Bones of Kings are scattered to the Wind.—Return of the Sisters to Paray.—Margaret receives the Title of Venerable.—Proceedings at the Court of Rome.—Sister Sophie de Charmasse.—Miraculous Cure of Sister M. de Sales.—Certificate of Dr. Carmoy.—Bishop Héricourt.—Another Miracle.—Discussion of the Virtues of Margaret Mary under Gregory XVI.—Pius IX. renews it.—His Visit to the Daughters of St. Mary.—Cardinal Patrizi.—Mgr. Arnaldi.—The English Bishops under Cardinal Wiseman petition the Holy See in Favor of the Beatification.—Pastoral of the Bishop of Autun.—Ceremony at Paray.—Conclusion.

We left the Religious of Paray-le-Monial in 1786 united around the precious remains of this holy Sister, and offering to their God solemn thanksgivings in memory of the inestimable gift of His Sacred Heart. But alas! they were not long to enjoy this sweet security, and the return of these family festivals. The years which followed were full of anguish. At length, in 1792, it was signified to them that they should quit these holy places. Yes, the cells, the cloisters, the Church, and even the chapel of the Sacred Heart—which had been raised by the privations and the sweat of the Sisters—under the eyes of Margaret Mary, all was to become the property of the nation! And in the name of liberty they were enjoined to separate, and discontinue the pious exercises which were the whole joy and consolation of their lives!

With broken hearts they parted, and sought refuge in the bosoms of their respective families.

But God, who watches over the bones of His Saints, did not permit those of Margaret Mary to be profaned. They had been inclosed since the beginning of the century in an humble wooden coffer,* it having been found expedient to remove them to make room for another defunct. Sister Mary Teresa Petit was authorized to carry with her to her home this precious deposit, and guard it under the shade of the paternal roof; and even in the most dismal days of the Revolution, while the tombs of St. Denis were being violated, and the ashes of kings scattered to the winds, the earthly tenement of the humble virgin of Paray was surrounded with the respect and veneration of the faithful.

As the horizon cleared, the dispersed community by degrees formed again, and the holy body was restored to its bosom. But many years passed ere the possession of the monastery could be regained. In 1817 a certain num-

* This is proved by the following attestation of Mary Christina Melin: "We, the Superior, Assistant, and other Sisters, certify that, having been obliged to open the vault of our venerable Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque, to bury there one of our Sisters, we brought out the bones from the bier to inclose them in a little coffer which was placed in the inside case. We have, nevertheless, taken out a little bone and a tooth, which we sent to our dear Sisters at Moulins, and which we attest to be authentic. In faith of which we signed this on the 26th of November, 1705, in Monastery of the Visitation St. Mary's of Paray.

Sister Mary Christina Melin, Superior,
Sister Anne Elizabeth de la Garde,
Sister Mary Rosalie de Lionne,
Sister Peronne Rosalie de Farges,
Sister Claude Margaret Billet,
Sister Anne Mary Cordier, Sacristan,
} Counselors.

ber of Sisters, despairing of its being ever restored, went on the foundation of La Charity-sur-Loire, and their first thought was to enrich themselves with the precious treasure Providence had preserved to them. But the ecclesiastical and civil authorities opposed the translation of the holy body which Paray could claim by so many titles. At last, on June 16, 1825, the Sisters, who had found a temporary shelter in a deserted Benedictine Abbey, became repossessed of their ancient house, for which they paid fifty thousand francs, a sum enormous to their poverty. All was in the greatest dilapidation; yet, to their great consolation, neither the sanctuary of the Church nor the chapel of the garden had been invaded, and the paintings on the walls and ceilings, representing in various places the Sacred Heart, had sustained no other injuries than those of time. The want of pecuniary resources compelled them to defer repairing their Church till 1854. Some persons strove to persuade them to throw down a building which seemed on the verge of ruin, but they took good care not to follow any such counsel: these ruined, tottering walls, witnesses of the communications of Our Lord with His Spouse, were, in their eyes, the most beautiful of relics. The architect had to change his plans. An interior renovation in the Roman style embellished this old building, and seemed to promise it a permanent solidity and security.

Among so many vicissitudes, the hope of seeing Margaret Mary one day raised on the altars of the Church had always lived in these holy souls; a hope that seemed chimerical during the eighteenth century, in presence of the violent opposition given to the Devotion of the Sacred Heart itself. While the Congregation of Rites refused to approve the Feast of the Sacred Heart, that is to say, the work to which the Servant of God had consecrated

her life, it was hardly possible to expect of the same congregation a decision favorable to the cause of Margaret Mary. Thus it was suspended. The Revolution found things in this state, and raised new obstacles, so that the Process prepared in 1725 never left the archives of the bishopric of Autun to be sent to Rome till the year 1820. At this period two great preliminaries had been settled: the first, in the decree of the Congregation of Rites, approving the Feast of the Sacred Heart; the second, in the sixty-second and sixty-third propositions of the bull *Auctorem Fidei*, which closed the mouth of the last adversaries of this Devotion (1794). In effect, after the first examination of the Sacred Congregation, Pope Leo XII. signed the commission for the introduction of the cause March 30, 1824. It was then that the Servant of God received the title of *Venerable.*

Forty years intervened between the opening of the cause at the court of Rome and its happy conclusion—1824, 1864. Instead of giving in detail all the incidents of this long procedure, we will call the attention of the reader to some of its more characteristic points.

Before passing to the examination of the virtues and miracles, Rome wished to assure herself that the Servant of God had always been in possession of the reputation for sanctity which she enjoyed from the beginning. Hence were interrogated the living, and in some manner the dead. This was made clear from the writings of such persons as had occasion to speak of her in their works on Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. First, Fathers de la Colombière, Croiset, and Gallifet; then St. Alphonsus Liguori, Cardinal Gerdil, and Mgr. Albergotto, Bishop of Arezzo; more recently Canon Muzzarelli, and Mgr. Lambruschini. And this imposing assemblage of witnesses, forming an uninterrupted chain,

evidently proved that the voice of the pastors united to that of the faithful to proclaim that Margaret Mary was one of the most privileged souls of these latter times, and that she had received from Heaven the recompense of her heroic virtues. This is in fact a constant truth, and one that had already found its application in the cause of St. Bonaventure. It is only the Holy Ghost who can guarantee a similar duration to the memory of those who are no more, all renown founded only on human titles being necessarily fragile and perishable.*

In the course of the year 1830, Paray saw the arrival of the judges designated by the Holy See to institute the *Apostolic Process* on the virtues of the Servant of God. For five whole months, two sessions, each of several hours' duration, were held morning and evening in the Church of the Monastery. Thirty-six witnesses were successively heard, whose depositions, drawn from the source of constant tradition and public notoriety, corroborated the statements made by the historians of Margaret Mary, by her own writings, by the memoirs of contemporary Sisters, and by the ordinary process of 1715. The judges, having learned that there existed at Autun an ancient Religious whose age and infirmity did not permit her to appear at their tribunal, went thither, that they might not lose a testimony so much the more precious, as by the medium of this person they could ascend to the contemporaries of Margaret Mary, and gather informations worthy of credit on facts which had occurred during the last twenty years of the seventeenth century. Indeed, Sister Sophia de Charmasse, the Religious in question, having been received as a boarder at Paray in her fourth year, remembered perfectly well

* Causæ S. Bonaventuræ, Ap. Bened. XIV., *de Serv. Dei Beatif.*, lib. 11, cap. 29.

to have known in her childhood Sister Anne Mary Laumonier, the lay Sister who, admitted to the novitate in 1690, had been healed of the wound in her foot by the mere touch of the robe of Margaret Mary. Sister Sophia had often heard the Religious relate the circumstances of this remarkable cure. She had also lived for seventeen years with Sister Claudia Mary Chatonnay, a venerable Religious who, a little before her death, had hemmed Sophia's profession veil. Among the witnesses heard was Sister Mary de Sales Charault, restored to health a few years before by the intercession of her on whom her deposition was required. Attacked with a very grave disease, reputed incurable, which betrayed the presence of a cancer in the stomach, she had been healed the moment she had finished a novena in honor of Blessed Margaret Mary.*

While the Apostolic Commissaries were still at Paray, and a little before their departure, God was pleased to make the glory of His Servant still more brilliant in their eyes by causing them to witness two extraordinary cures, one of which, having been submitted to the examination of the Sacred Congregation, has been declared miraculous.

The twenty-second of July had been fixed for the opening of the tomb, and the visit to the remains of

* This miracle is one of those admitted by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The attestation of the physician, signed by a name very respectable in the faculty of Montpellier, concludes thus: "From all these, the undersigned regards the cure of Sister Mary de Sales Charault as entirely foreign to the succors of art, and as the effect of the divine protection. He thanks God for having enabled him to state a fact which will glorify Him, through His Servant Margaret Mary, by whose intercession this favor has been granted. In faith whereof he signs the present certificate, &c.

"At Paray, June 10, 1828. CARMOY, D. M. M."

the Blessed Servant of God; a juridical act at which his lordship the Bishop of Autun wished to preside in person. A great number of ecclesiastics joined their Bishop, and many came also from the surrounding dioceses. The simple people were not less eager; there were hourly arrivals from Lyons, Avignon, and Puy. All expressed the greatest confidence in the merits of the illustrious lover of the Heart of Jesus, and this confidence was rewarded by a wonderful effusion of graces and spiritual consolations.

Now while preparations were being made for this beautiful ceremony, a poor sick Sister languished in the infirmary, between life and death, on a bed of pain which she had not left for three years. Mary Teresa Petit, such was her name, had long suffered from a grievous aneurism, complicated with other grave diseases. Her weakness was so great that physicians feared lest she should expire under the lancet every time they were obliged to bleed her to give her some relief. Several times the last sacraments had been administered to her. There remained in her only the breath, and it was very difficult in approaching her to catch any of her words; yet, reanimating her confidence in the Servant of God, on the vigil of the Solemnity she clothed herself with some linens that had been laid on the holy tomb. She at once felt a strange revolution in the region of the heart, and such terrible shooting pains that she screamed aloud. The crisis lasted about a half an hour, after which, the pains having ceased and the fever cooled off, she remained several hours in a peaceful slumber. Next day she awoke cured. She declared what had happened to her, and the Superior, after some hesitation, allowed her to rise. She rose, dressed herself without difficulty, knelt before the altar of the infirmary to

return thanks, and appeared the same day in the chapel and in the parlor, not without causing the greatest surprise to those who knew the sad state she had been in the evening before. She was seen to spend almost an hour in thanksgiving before the tomb of her benefactress.

The same day, a poor infirm workwoman, whom some charitable person had brought from Lyons, found at the tomb of the saint the health she had come to seek. At the age of eight years (she was then twenty-four), the scrofula had attacked the bone of one of her limbs, after which a grave accident compelled the surgeons to cut off part of the tibia. The pain continuing, she could neither walk nor kneel without suffering intensely, so that the medical men declared that amputation was necessary. The eve of the day for opening the tomb she had vainly tried to kneel in the confessional. But as she came out, to her great astonishment she was able to kneel, and continued to do so whenever she pleased, without the least inconvenience. She had become so alert that she tired healthy persons in the long rambles she took with them outside the town.

With a lively impression of these events, the news of which spread through the pious crowd of pilgrims, the beautiful festival was celebrated. It is easy to imagine the eagerness of the people to venerate these bones which had wrought such prodigies. After they had been visited and acknowledged by the sworn physicians who prepared the *procès verbal*, they were inclosed in a case sealed with the arms of the bishop and laid with respect under the pavement of the cloister, awaiting the day, still distant, for the happy issue of the cause. Twenty-four years were yet to flow past ere it would be permitted to honor

them with public veneration, and to expose them on the altars.

The discussion of the virtues of Margaret Mary was not finished for fourteen years later. All her writings, all her acts, were submitted to the most severe and minute examination. Her revelations, her spiritual maxims, her teachings on the Sacred Heart involved at every step the most delicate and difficult points of dogmatic, moral, and mystic theology, from the mystery of the Incarnation to the doctrine of grace, and divers states of prayer. The consistorial advocate, a man of consummate experience and great sagacity, avowed that none of the numerous causes he had defended at the court of Rome had cost him so much trouble. Finally the Sacred Congregation rendered a favorable vote on the virtues of the Servant of God, practised in a heroic degree. But as we know it is to the successor of St. Peter that the divine assistance has been promised, to him alone by consequence it belongs to pronounce the final decision, and he never does so without having maturely deliberated and consulted God in prayer. Gregory XVI. died before publishing the decree, bequeathing to his successor this act of supreme authority and paternal tenderness. Pius IX. cheerfully accepted the grand heritage.

From the first months of his pontificate it was perceived that the success of the holy cause was dear to the blessed Pontiff whom heaven had placed upon the throne to love, to pray, and to suffer. One morning in July, 1846, he went on foot from the Quirinal Palace to the Visitation Chapel, where he celebrated Mass. This was the prelude of a still greater favor. On Sunday, August 25, he came again, accompanied by Cardinal Patrizi, reporter of the cause, and Mgr. Arnaldi, postulator, to publish in presence of the whole community the decree so long expected. By

a most delicate attention, the Holy Father chose, to give this joy to his well-beloved daughters, one of the days of the Octave of their holy Mother, Jane Frances de Chantal. The monastery of St. Mary at Rome will never lose the remembrance of that beautiful day.

However, the discussion already commenced on the three miracles submitted to the Sacred Congregation was unremittingly pursued. But great as was the zeal of Mgr. Borghi, the postulator of the cause, it could not be finished before 1864. When at length the decree appeared, April 24, 1864, transports of joy were felt not only in the Visitation Order, but, it may be said, throughout the whole world, wherever hearts beat to the Name of Jesus Christ. Do we not know that, in 1859, the English Bishops, united in council under the presidency of the illustrious and regretted Cardinal Wiseman, did not separate without addressing to the Holy See a supplication in favor of the beatification of Margaret Mary? The diocese of Autun, which had the honor of giving birth to the Blessed Sister, and still piously guarded her tomb, and in which this cause had been long popular, leaped for joy when the voice of its venerated Bishop announced in these terms the publication of the decree:

"Rome has spoken, beloved brethren: the great voice which alone should have the privilege of resounding through the universe, and making it leap for joy in the midst of its indifferences and agitation, this august voice makes itself heard to decree to virtue a new triumph, and it is to us that it is specially addressed this day. The gaze of the Vicar of Jesus Christ is fixed on our diocese; he has discovered in the shadows of our old monastery a life as full of heroism as it was modest in the eyes of men, and inclining with respect before a poor obscure Religious, he, the organ of the divine glorifications on

earth, prepares *to raise her from the dust of her tomb, and place her among the princes of his people.* And in the joy of our heart we eagerly announce to you this good news, which will be for you and for the whole Catholic world tidings of great joy: after so many procedures, examens, and discussions, which loudly proclaim the great wisdom of the Church, we hold in our hands the 'Decree on the miracles relative to the Beatification and Canonization of the Venerable Servant of God, Sister Mary Margaret Alacoque, a professed Religious of the Visitation of St. Mary.' Three miracles operated by her intercession are there received as authentic and sufficient, and a last decree will not be slow to announce that we may in all security proceed to the solemn feast of her exaltation. Soon then, placing on our altars her precious relics, and saluting her with the sweet title of Blessed, we can say to her, with a confidence that leans on the infallible authority of the Church: *Remember us before the Lord. Tell Him that thou art our Sister—that for thy sake He may be propitious to us, and that our soul may live in consideration of thine.*"

The laborious procedures being terminated, it was easy to foresee that the beatification would quickly follow. To prelude this great solemnity, an apostolic delegate, Mgr. Borghi, came to draw from the tomb the holy body so soon to be offered to the veneration of the faithful. The whole city went before the envoy of the Apostolic See. There was not a part of the old monastery, from the infirmary to the chapel, which spoke not of Margaret Mary, whose whole life was retraced by ingenious emblems accompanied with legends. Tears flowed from all eyes at the opening of the sepulchre, and all hands—sacerdotal hands—were extended to gather some of the mold that clung to the sides of the coffin.

Finally, on the eighteenth of September, the same year, the guns of the castle of San Angelo announced by joyous salvos that the lover of the Sacred Heart had just been proclaimed Blessed in the Vatican basilica; and on the evening of that day were seen before her image two bishops, both old men: one was the Father of the great Christian family; the other, the Shepherd of the diocese of Autun; the latter offered to the old Roman some gracious and modest gifts, among others, a bouquet of flowers, emblematic of the virtues his diocese had seen flourish in the blessed inclosure of Paray, whose perfumes had embalmed the whole Church.

Thus has Our Lord been pleased to glorify her who sought not her own glory, and who delighted in abjections and in sufferings. He has placed her among His princes, among the princes of His people. What do I say? She sees at her feet the princes and the pastors of the people of God!

But it seems to me that in the midst of her triumph, from the height of heaven, where she is witness of our zeal in honoring her memory, nothing could please her more than to see increase in our hearts the love of Jesus Christ, that love on which she lived, and of which she died. Our homages are valuable in her eyes only inasmuch as they ascend to the Heart of Jesus our Redeemer.

Her whole life, a life so obscure and common in appearance, is a beautiful commentary on these words of the *Imitation of Christ:* "The love of Jesus is noble and generous, it urges us to do great things.

"Love knows no measure; but, like a consuming fire, it extends, and passes all measure.

"Love feels no burden, values no labor, would willingly do more than it can; it complains not of impossibility, because it conceives that it may and can do all things.

"And therefore it accomplishes many things where he that loves not faints and lies down.

"Like a lively and penetrating flame it lifts itself toward heaven, and opens to itself a passage through all obstacles."

Is it not a flame of this nature that darts from the heart of Margaret Mary, to inflame and consume all hearts?

A little before her death, she wrote to a dear and most intimate friend:—

"'Love, and do whatever you wish,' says St. Austin, for he who has love, has all. Do all by love, in love, and for love; for it is love that gives value to every thing. Love will not have a divided heart; it wishes for all or nothing. Love will make all things easy to you. Render then love for love, and never forget Him whose love caused Him to die for you; but you will not love Him till you know how to suffer in silence and prefer Him to the creature."

The language she addressed to this dear friend is to-day addressed to all who know her life, her works, her rude combats and her magnificent rewards. To prefer God to the creature is assuredly just; it is wise; it is even, it may be said, perfectly reasonable; but it is also the greatest sweetness. When in Him we find more than a friend, a friend who is the most beautiful of the children of men; when we know and firmly believe that now, after having suffered so much for us, He is seated glorious at the right hand of His celestial Father, and that of His Kingdom there shall be no end, the heart may indeed sigh and languish, but it is no longer troubled, and the most painful crosses have about them the sweetness they inbibe from the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ alone.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

DECREE OF BEATIFICATION, PIUS IX., FOR A PERPETUAL REMEMBRANCE.

Translation of the Decree of Beatification.—Translation of the Decree on the Virtues.—Translation of the Decree on the Miracles.—Translation of the Miracles.—Cure of a Sister in the Monastery of Venice.—She is visited by Cardinal Monico, the Patriarch.—Letter of Madame Casse of Bordeaux.—Cure of Mdlle. Casebonne, related by herself.—Cure certified by the Bishops of Bayonne, Aire, and Dax, by Priests, Lawyers, Physicians, &c.—Mademoiselle Casebonne visits Paray-le-Monial.—Litany of Blessed Margaret Mary in Latin and English.—Approved by the Bishop of Autun for private Recitation.—Portrait of Blessed Margaret Mary in possession of Descendants of Chrysostom Alacoque.—All Portraits not taken from this spurious.—Letter of the Vicar-General of Autun.—Originals of the Decrees of Beatification, &c.

JESUS CHRIST, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who, moved by an excess of charity, after having taken the infirmity of our mortal nature, offered Himself to God on the altar of the cross, a spotless victim, to deliver us from the frightful servitude of sin, has had no more pressing desire than to excite in every way in the souls of men the flames with which His Heart is consumed, as we see in the Gospel in His assurance to His Disciples: *I came to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be enkindled?*

Now, in order to inflame still more this fire of charity, He has willed

that the veneration and worship of His Sacred Heart should be established and propagated in the Church.

And who, that has not a heart of bronze, will not feel urged to return love for love to this Heart, full of sweetness, which has been transpierced by a lance, to the end to offer our soul an asylum and a refuge, wherein it will be sheltered and secured against all the attacks of the enemy?

Who would not be excited to render the most ardent homages to this Sacred Heart, from whose wound flowed water and blood, the sources of our life and our salvation?

To establish this pious practice, at once so salutary and so legitimate, and to spread it among men, Our Lord designed to choose His venerable Servant, Margaret Mary Alacoque, a Religious of the Order of the Visitation of St. Mary, who, by the innocence of her life, and the continual exercise of all virtues, by the grace of God showed herself worthy of so high a ministry and employment. Born of a respectable family in the village of Lauthecourt, in the diocese of Autun, in France, she evinced from her childhood so much docility, a virtue and regularity so far in advance of her age, that her parents could then presage in a certain manner what she was one day to become.

While yet a child, she cared not for the diversions so common at that tender age, and sought in the house some retired place where she could in profound recollection offer to God her loving adorations and her homages. Arrived at adolescence, she avoided much society, and delighted to frequent the church and pass there long hours in prayer. From her early years, being consecrated to God by the vow of virginity, she afflicted her body by fasting, disciplines, and all sorts of austerities, that she might in some manner hedge in with thorns the flower of her virginity. She was also an illustrious model of meekness and humility; for her father dying, and her mother succumbing beneath the weight of age and sickness, she was treated with so much severity and harshness by the persons charged with governing the house, that she was nearly always in want of the necessary food and clothing. Whatever the tyranny and injustice of such conduct might

be, she bore all during long years with equality of soul, never losing sight of the blessed example of Jesus' suffering. At the age of nine years, she was for the first time admitted to the eucharistic banquet, and drew, in this celestial aliment, such ardent charity, that this divine fire seemed to radiate from her lips and from her eyes. Equally inflamed with charity for her neighbor, she bitterly deplored the misery of many children, all but abandoned by their parents, growing up in vice, and ignorance of the things most necessary for salvation; she patiently taught them the mysteries of faith, formed them to virtue, and habitually deprived herself of a considerable part of her daily bread to nourish them. Having fixed her choice on the celestial Bridegroom, when her mother proposed to her rich and brilliant alliances she constantly refused them, and the more surely to guard the faith she had pledged to her heavenly Spouse, she determined to embrace the life of virgins consecrated to God. After long and serious deliberations, after having in prayer consulted the divine will, she was received, at the age of twenty-three years, among the Religious of the Visitation of St. Mary, in the monastery of Paray-le-Monial, in the diocese of Autun. Having shown during her novitiate all that was to be hoped from her beautiful dispositions, from the virtue and innocence of her life, she was admitted to pronounce her solemn vows. After her profession she was seen to advance rapidly in perfection, offering to her companions consecrated to God a shining example of all virtues. There might be observed in her a wonderful humility, an extraordinary promptitude in obeying, an admirable patience in supporting all sorts of contrarieties, an extreme care to observe the least rules, an austerity which led her continually to macerate her flesh, an indefatigable ardor for prayer, to which she applied night and day, and in which her soul, disengaged from the senses, was often inundated with celestial gifts. In meditating on the sufferings of Our Lord Jesus Christ, she experienced such lively pain, and was so inflamed with divine love, that she often fainted away and remained nearly lifeless.

The eminence of her virtues having fixed on her the admiration of all her companions, she was charged with forming the young novices

to the religious life, a charge for which none was more competent than the venerable Margaret Mary, who by her example encouraged the young girls, whose guardian and mistress she became, to enter the ways of perfection and pursue them resolutely.

One day, while she prayed with unusual fervor before the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lord Jesus Christ made known to her that it would be very pleasing to Him to see established the worship of His Sacred Heart, so inflamed with love for men, and that He wished to confide to her this mission. Humble as she was, the Servant of God was terrified, esteeming herself unworthy of so high a ministry; yet to obey the Divine will, and satisfy the desire she had to see kindled in all hearts the fire of Divine love, she used all her influence, both with the Sisters of the monastery and her friends outside it, that this Sacred Heart might receive from them all sorts of honors and adorations. The venerable Servant of God had for this purpose to endure great pains, to surmount numerous difficulties; yet she never lost courage, but, counting on succors from on high, she applied with as much activity as constancy to establish this devotion, which she soon saw extended by the aid of Divine grace to the great profit of souls, and propagated afar through the Church.

At length, desiring to see her bonds broken, that she might fly to the celestial nuptials of the Lamb, for which she so ardently sighed, consumed less by sickness than by the flames of charity, she reached the term of her mortal life, on the seventeenth day of October, 1690.

The opinion already held of her sanctity was increased after her death by the prodigies attributed to the Venerable Servant of God. Hence, in the year 1715, the Bishop of Autun, in an opportune time, took regular informations on her life and manners. But the revolutions which at the end of the eighteenth century convulsed nearly all Europe, did not permit the cause to be *deferred* to the judgment of the Holy See. The dreadful tempest once appeased, the judgment of the Apostolic See was invoked, and the process of the virtues by which Margaret Mary became so illustrious was introduced in the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Finally, after a long and serious examination,

we have pronounced, by a decree promulgated August 23, 1846, that she practised these virtues in an heroic degree.

Afterward in the same congregation was proposed the discussion of the miracles which established the belief that heaven had rendered testimony to the sanctity of the Venerable Margaret Mary, and at the close of a severe examination, the Consultors and Cardinals having given a favorable opinion, we ourselves, having invoked light from above, have rendered our affirmative sentence concerning the truth of the same miracles, this fourteenth day of May, 1864.

Referring to the same Cardinals a last question, namely: if the beatification of the Venerable Margaret Mary might be securely proceeded with: reunited in our presence on the twenty-fourth of June in the current year, they replied in the affirmative.

We then, after having implored for so important an act the succor of Heaven, on the twenty-fourth day of June in the same year, we have decreed that, when we should judge proper, we might with security accord to the Venerable Servant of God all the honors and privileges reserved to the beatified, till the celebration of her solemn canonization.

Therefore, moved by the prayers of nearly all the bishops of France, and those of the Sisters of the Visitation of St. Mary, with the advice and concurrence of our Venerable Brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, members of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, in virtue of our Apostolic authority, we permit that the Venerable Servant of God, Margaret Mary Alacoque, should receive henceforth the appellation of Blessed, and that her body and her relics (which, however, are not to be carried in public procession) may be publicly exposed to the veneration of the faithful.

Moreover, in virtue of the same authority, we permit to be said in her honor the Office and Mass of the Common of Virgins, with the proper prayers approved by us, conformably to the Rubrics of the Missal and of the Roman Breviary.

Yet we accord this permission only in the Diocese of Autun, and in all the churches of Visitation Convents, wherever they may be situated, and on the seventeenth day of October, to all the faithful,

regular and secular, bound to the recital of the canonical hours, and, as regards the Mass, to all priests who celebrate in the same churches on the day of the feast.

In fine, we permit that, in the current year, from the date of the present letter, the solemnity of the beatification of the Venerable Servant of God, Margaret Mary Alacoque, in the Diocese of Autun and in the above mentioned churches, with Office and Mass of double major rite, on the day indicated by the Ordinary of each place, and only after this solemnity shall have been celebrated in the Vatican basilica. The whole, notwithstanding the Ordinances, Apostolic and others, which would be contrary thereto.

We desire that all copies of the present letter, even printed, provided they be signed with the signature of the Secretary, and guaranteed with the seal of the Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, shall obtain the same confidence as the expression of our will, which would be inspired by the presentation of the original.

Given at Castelgandolfo, under the ring of the Fisherman, this nineteenth day of the month of August, the year 1864, the nineteenth year of our Pontificate.

N. Card. Paracciani Clarelli.

2.

Decree on the Virtues.

Decree concerning the Church of Autun, for the Beatification and Canonization of the Venerable Servant of God, Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque, a Professed Religious of the Order of the Visitation St. Mary, instituted by St. Francis de Sales. On this question, namely:—

Can it be proved that the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, toward God and the neighbor, as well as the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance, and others which follow them, were practised in an heroic degree in this case, and with the effects they ought to produce?

Our amiable Redeemer Jesus, whose delights are to be with the children of men, has endowed his venerable Servant Margaret Mary Alacoque with all benedictions from on high, from her tenderest years, assisting her with His love in her youth, and strengthening her amid her violent combats against the world, the flesh, and the demon. She entered religion after her twentieth year, and was professed in the Order of the Visitation, founded by St. Francis de Sales. She mortified her body by fasts, vigils, and continual macerations. Having a horror of the vanities of the world, from her youth she embraced all kinds of penance and mortification, and exercised the most sublime virtue. Consumed by the most ardent love for the divine Redeemer Jesus, she strove with her whole heart and by the most touching exhortations to enkindle the same love in all the faithful by the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, till the hour when, burning to be dissolved, and to be united to her heavenly Spouse, she piously gave up her soul, in the year of Our Lord 1690, and the forty-third of her age.

The life of the venerable Margaret Mary, adorned with the most sublime virtues, the severity of her penance, her ardent love for Jesus suffering, the renown of this venerable virgin spread afar, determined the Bishop of Autun, in 1715, to institute a process on her morals, actions, and death. This process, after long delays, caused by different circumstances, and by the troubles of France and Europe toward the end of the last century, having been finally produced and referred to the Congregation of Rites, was received in the year 1819, with another process attesting the uninterrupted renown of the virtues and miracles of the Venerable Servant of God. Afterward, in the year 1824, His Holiness Pope Leo XII. signed the commission for the introduction of the cause.

From this moment the apostolic processes were instituted according to the decree of the sovereign Pontiff, and, according to long-established custom, all that was necessary for this cause was prepared carefully: hence several years glided by before the examination of the theological and cardinal virtues of the Servant of God could be undertaken. On April 28, 1840, about a hundred and fifty years after the death of the

Venerable Margaret Mary, the examination of her virtues was proceeded with, first in the palace of the most Reverend Cardinal Della Porta, reporter of the cause, and afterward, April 4, 1843, in the apostolic palace of the Vatican, in the presence of the Most Reverend Cardinals, members of the Congregation of Rites; in fine, April 4, in the same palace, in presence of His Holiness Gregory XVI., the Most Reverend Cardinal Constantine Patrizi, reporter of the cause, proposed this question: *Whether the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity toward God and the neighbor, with the cardinal virtues of Prudence, &c.*, after which the Reverend Cardinals and Fathers Consultors gave their suffrages.

Having heard all, the Sovereign Pontiff suspended according to custom the last declaration, aware that in so important a decision it was necessary to implore the aid and light of Heaven by fervent prayers. But, before making known his intentions, he went to take possession of a better life. His successor in the Sovereign Pontificate, Pope Pius IX., took cognizance of the state of the cause, and ordered the General Congregation of Rites to assemble in his presence, August 11, of the same year, to discuss anew the question of the virtues of the Venerable Margaret. The Most Reverend Cardinals and other Fathers met on an appointed day in the Apostolic palace of the Quirinal, in presence of the Holy Father Pius IX., and when the Most Reverend Cardinal Patrizi had proposed this question, namely:— *Whether the theological virtues, &c.*, they all gave their votes, and after having heard them attentively, His Holiness invited them to redouble their prayers to implore the Divine succor before making known his will. After having prayed with much fervor, and repassed all in his mind, he resolved to declare his sentiments on this day, the twelfth Sunday after Pentecost, two days after the celebration of the Feast of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Foundress of the Visitation Order established by St. Francis de Sales, and of which the Venerable Margaret was a professed Religious. Having invoked God's mercy by his pious prayers, our Holy Father repaired to the monastery of the Visitation, attended by the Most Reverend Cardinals Francis Louis

Micara, Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, Dean of the Sacred College, Prefect of the Congregation of Holy Rites, and Constantine Patrizi, his Vicar for the city, reporter of the cause, Reverend Father Andrew Mary Frattini, promoter of the Holy Faith, and me, the undersigned secretary, and solemnly decided: "That the theological and cardinal virtues, and other virtues consequent thereon, were practised in an heroic degree by the Venerable Servant of God, Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque, so that in all security the discussion of the miracles may be proceeded with."

This decree has been published and inserted in the acts of the Congregation of Holy Rites, in compliance with the orders of His Holiness, this 23d day of August, 1846.

F. L. Card. MICARA,

[L. S.] Prefect of the Congregation of Holy Rites.

J. G. FATATI, Secretary.

3.

DECREE ON THE MIRACLES.

Decree concerning the Church of Autun, for the Beatification and Canonization of the Venerable Servant of God, Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque, a Professed Religious of the Order of the Visitation of St. Mary, instituted by St. Francis de Sales.

On this question, namely:

Can it be proved that miracles, and some particular miracles, have been wrought in this present case, and have they produced the effect stated?

All inflamed with the fire of the Divine charity which Jesus Christ came on earth to kindle, the Venerable Margaret Mary Alacoque neglected nothing to cause the reign, growth, and extension of veneration and piety toward the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, whence would escape and radiate on all sides the flames of love. And though in this Servant of God, while she lived in the world, all virtues shone resplendent, yet all were included in the burning love with which she

was inflamed for the heart of Jesus, and the indefatigable zeal with which she endeavored to excite all hearts to return Him love for love. After yielding to the seraphic ardors that consumed her, she went to repose in the sweet embraces of the Heart of Jesus, and the Lord willed that miracles and prodigies should manifest on earth the glory with which she is crowned in heaven. Following up the informations taken on these same miracles, by means of registers proving the results of the process, we submitted to the judgment of the Congregation of Rites three miracles which were performed, and said to be divinely accomplished by the prayers of the Servant of God, Margaret Mary. Therefore, this cause began to be examined at first in an ante-preparatory assembly, September 6, 1859, under the presidency of the Most Rev. Cardinal Constantine Patrizi, Bishop of Porto and St. Rufina, Prefect of the Congregation of Holy Rites, reporter of the cause. It was again discussed in a preparatory assembly which met at the Apostolic palace of the Vatican, September 15, 1863. In short, it was submitted to a third debate of the same kind, in a general assembly at the same palace of the Vatican, in presence of our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX., March 1st, the same year; during which, after the Most Rev. Reporter of the cause had proposed this question, namely: Whether there have been miracles, and what miracles, in this case, and with what effects? the Most Rev. Cardinals and the Fathers Consultors gave each their suffrages. After having heard them, Our Most Holy Father, not wishing to give his decision immediately, invited them to beg for him of the Divine Wisdom, by their prayers and supplications, the lights he needed in order to pronounce a definitive sentence.

Finally, he designated the day on which the Church honors, each year, the Memory of the holy martyr Fidelis. Hence, Our Most Holy Father, after having celebrated, with the most ardent devotion, the holy mysteries in his private chapel at the Vatican, repaired to the palace of the Urban College of the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, there to venerate the relics of this invincible martyr; then, having ordered the Most Rev. Cardinal Patrizi, Bishop, &c., to

come to the aforesaid palace, with the Rev. Father Andrew Mary Frattini, promoter of the holy Faith, and myself, the undersigned secretary, he made in our presence the following declaration:—

"That he admits the three miracles of the third order wrought by the Almighty power of God at the intercession of the Venerable Margaret Mary Alacoque, viz.: first, the instantaneous and complete cure of Sister Mary Teresa Petit, a Professed Religious of the Order of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of an inveterate aneurism of the heart; secondly, of the instantaneous and complete cure of Sister Mary de Sales Charault, a Professed Religious of the same Order, of an internal cancer in the stomach; thirdly, the instantaneous and complete cure of Sister Mary Aloysia Bollani, of the same Order, of a tubercular phthisis, characterized by grave symptoms, and considered incurable."

This decree has been published and inserted in the acts of the Congregation of Holy Rites, by order of His Holiness, April 24, 1864.

CONSTANTINE, Bishop of Porto and St. Rufina.

[L. S.] Cardinal PATRIZI, Prefect of the Congregation of Holy Rites.

D. BARTOLINI, Secretary of the said Congregation.

No. 2.

MIRACLES.

Miracles of Blessed Margaret.—Particular Favors attributed to her Intercession.

Three miracles, obtained through the intercession of Blessed Margaret Mary, have been approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

Two of these we have mentioned in the body of this history (chap. 30); we shall here give the third, accomplished in the person of Sister Louise Philippine Bollani, of the monastery of Venice.

We believe, too, that the details which Madame Casse, of Bordeaux, and Mdlle. Casebonne, of Pau, have transmitted to Paray concerning their cure, which they attribute to the intercession of Blessed Mar-

garet, but on the nature of which the same authority has given no decision, will be found interesting and edifying.

RELATION OF A MIRACLE OBTAINED BY THE INTERCESSION OF THE VENERABLE SISTER MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, AT THE MONASTERY OF THE VISITATION, AT VENICE.

The health of our dear Sister, Louise Philippine Bollani, began to give us much inquietude in April, 1838. From that period it may be said that her disease ceased not to grow worse, and there was added to it a scorbutic affection, which caused her intense pain all over her body, but chiefly in the head and mouth. Despite all the care and remedies lavished on her, we saw with grief that her sufferings only increased. At the close of 1839, she began to have intermittent fevers, and the febrifuges administered were very injurious to her chest. In August, the same remedies were employed as are prescribed for other fevers, but without successful results. In October, she was so ill that she could no longer recite her office. In November and December, the cough, the oppression, the aversion to food, and constant sleeplessness, so exhausted her strength, that we gave up all hopes of her recovery. Remedies could not act on an attenuated temperament, incapable of supporting them. Her symptoms aggravating, in the months of January and February she appeared more dead than alive. On the 4th of March, the fever increased to such a degree that she could not stand. The cough redoubled, and was now accompanied with hemoptysis and sharp pains in the chest. Our physician, M. Trois, who had attended her from the beginning, and had never flattered us with much hope of her recovery, left us a prey to the painful apprehension of losing her at any moment. On the 28th, our dear invalid had the happiness of receiving the Viaticum. She continued to suffer intensely, from such violent pains that she could not turn in her bed ever so little without enduring agony. The least movement, even that which we made when changing the sheets, was intolerable to her.

On the 29th March, God inspired our honored Mother, Julia Cajetan

de Thienne, to address herself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by the intercession of His beloved Spouse, the Venerable Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque, to obtain a cure long despaired of. Next day our good Mother caused the whole community to commence a novena, enjoining the patient to unite in it, which she did, solely in obedience, it being contrary to the desire she had to be speedily with her Spouse. She had not forgotten that the obedient soul runs no risk of being deceived, and that a religious soul, who would offer sacrifices to God without obedience, would be in great error. During the novena there was no amelioration; on the contrary, her pains increased. Here we will faithfully transcribe her own words, as she declared to examiners charged to prove whether there was a miracle in her case:—

"Obliged by obedience to undertake the novena, on the third day, finding myself alone, and, despite the darkness, turning my eyes toward a picture of our Venerable Sister, which our honored Mother did me the favor to give me the first day, I saw this picture shine as though a ray of the sun had rendered it all resplendent. Surprised and confused, fearing that it was only an effect of my weakness, I looked around my room to see if this light did not come from some source, but all was plunged in obscurity except the image. At the same time I felt within me a lively sentiment of confidence, and of total abandonment to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Nevertheless, the fear that it was only an effect of my imagination, or rather (I ought to confess my misery) the fear that the favor might not be accorded to me made me use all possible efforts to reject this thought. But all in vain; God, wishing, doubtless, to reproach me with my want of submission to His adorable will, permitted that another evening (after having seen the same, but with the same incredulity), in looking toward the opposite side, I should see a monster so hideous, that in my terror I could not avoid screaming aloud. The astonished infirmarian asked what was the matter, but I replied: 'It is nothing.' Afterward the monster disappeared, and as I again fixed my eyes on the picture of Margaret Mary, I saw the cross which rested on her breast so resplendent, that it seemed radiant as the sun, and I could

distinguish there the holy name of Jesus. Suddenly a voice resounded within me: 'Submit thy will to Mine; acknowledge the treasure hidden in My Cross. I desire that thou shouldst sacrifice thyself entirely to My will.' These words made such an impression on my heart that it is impossible to describe it. The evening preceding the day of my cure, the sub-infirmarian, penetrated with a lively faith in the powerful intercession of our Venerable Sister, endeavored to make me share her sentiments, and as I became participator in them, I cheerfully sacrificed all my desires for the sole object of obtaining the beatification, so ardently desired, of our dear Sister. Shortly after, being alone a third time, I saw the same picture all resplendent. I then offered myself anew to accomplish the Divine Will, whatever it should cost me."

On the 6th of April, the eighth day of the novena, our dear invalid was in a most pitiable state, complaining particularly of her chest, the pain of which was agonizing. In the evening the fever was higher than usual, and she resigned herself to a very bad night. We spoke to her of the favor we expected next day; she acknowledged herself most unworthy of such a blessing, yet she besought God to hear the prayers of a community so dear to her, and to which she had always been so happy to belong. Her petition was accompanied by an ardent desire to be able to contribute in some manner to the beatification of our Venerable Sister Alacoque, an event so eagerly desired by our whole Order. She slept gently till midnight, when she was awakened by an oppression and suffocation so strong that she felt as though her last hour had come. Having taken some simple remedy, she fell into a profound slumber, which lasted five hours, and she awoke in the morning perfectly well. She made this partially known to the infirmarian, entreating her to pray for her at Holy Communion. The good infirmarian, after having received the bread of life, returned promptly to her patient, and, seeing that she continued well, encouraged her to rise. Sister Louise did not require much persuasion; she leaped from her bed and dressed herself with the first garments that came to hand, till the charitable infirmarian should provide her with what was

necessary. She had neither vail nor bandeau, &c., having put all carefully away, to spare the Sisters trouble after her death.

Our honored Mother had scarcely left the choir when she learned the happy news. She flew to the infirmary, and what were her joy and surprise to see run to her embrace, one whom she had left the evening before in so deplorable a state! The cessation of the fever and the pains, her face looking better than it had before her sickness, her steady step, her firm voice, all announced to the kind Mother that the intercession of the Venerable Sister Margaret had been powerful before God. Our dear Sister Louise Philippine asked leave to hear Mass, and to say at least in private the holy office, which was willingly granted. After Mass, our Mother, seeing that she continued well, gave her leave to assist at Vespers, and to descend to the refectory. The same day she resumed her employment in the pharmacy. At four she said matins in choir, and we saw with astonishment that our dear Sister, who the evening before could not make the least exertion without pain, held in her hands a large book for an hour and a half without the least inconvenience. The following day, it being Holy Week, she fasted, and has ever since followed all the community exercises, during several years, enjoying better health than before her illness.

We should add, that the day of her cure the physician had selected as that on which she should receive for the third time the Holy Viaticum. Having come to visit her about seven hours after her cure, and not finding her in the infirmary, he thought she was dead. What was his astonishment when she received him in the parlor, and he found all the symptoms of her disease vanished! Immediately, of his own movement, he reported the case to His Eminence the Cardinal Patriarch Monico, who hastened to visit the Sister. This favor was divulged, and we were solicited to make a formal statement of it, which was brought by the ordinary channels to the Sacred Congregation of Rites; the latter commissioned our Patriarch to prepare the process of it in due form. This was done in our parlor, about three years after the event.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MADAME CASSE, OF BORDEAUX, TO A PERSON WHO ASKED HER FOR THE PARTICULARS OF HER CURE.

I acknowledge that I knew not how to account for your silence, especially since my husband has informed you of the favor God has done me, His unworthy servant. I feared that his letter did not reach you, but the arrival of yours has dissipated my fears on that head. It is with respect and gratitude that I receive the precious and inestimable present* you have sent me. I carry it about me, and will always do so, hoping that God will enable me to remain faithful to the end: it is only in view of procuring the glory of God and the honor of His Servant that I give the relation you ask, referring all the glory to God, and the success to the faithful lover of His Heart, and to the prayers so many fervent souls offered for me.

A person desirous to see my health restored, and seeing that human redemies were unavailing, proposed that I should make a novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, through the intercession of the Venerable Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque, and make a vow to cause to be erected an altar and a confraternity of the Sacred Heart, if I should be suddenly and miraculously healed. I consented to this, desiring only the good pleasure of God, persuaded that, if so many prayers would do little for my bodily health, they would be most conducive to the health of my soul; but I did not at all expect my cure. I firmly believed that He who raised the dead could heal the sick when He pleased, but I felt convinced that Our Lord had already pronounced sentence of death against me.

A formula of prayers and practices was given me for the novena I was about to commence, and as there was question of the glory of God and the honor of His Servant, I was very zealous in procuring the prayers and good works of all the holy persons I knew. I sent copies of the said formula to all the seminaries, Religious Communities, schools, and pious persons I had the advantage of knowing. The novena began January 25. From that moment my symptoms became

* A little piece of Blessed Margaret's vail.

greatly aggravated; the fever, which heretofore attacked me only during the day, now left me no repose at night; the violent pains I endured, and the consequent depression of mind, increased my discouragement. I could not now retain any food, and so great was the pain I felt in being carried from my bed to the lounge, on which I was accustomed to spend the day, that I could not bear to be removed any more after the second day of the novena. Mass was daily offered in my room: the day before the last of the novena, I felt that I could not long survive. Involuntarily I was sad and disquieted, though I strove to desire all that God willed for me, and as He willed it. At length, on the 1st of February, He was pleased to grant me some relief; I slept tranquilly, without being awakened by the noise of those who were constantly coming in and out of my chamber. Next morning, at seven, I awoke, and you may imagine my joy and surprise: for eighteen months, strong doses of opium and chloroform had been powerless to produce refreshing sleep; this time I had taken no anodyne, and, moreover, I had passed the day in fearful suffering; my sleep was to me a mystery. It was the Feast of the Purification, and the last day of the novena. The headache and fever still remained, but my stomach could retain food, and the other violent pains had left me. The physician called again at eight, and found the fever still very high: at half-past eight, several persons came to my room to finish the novena by singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. During this singing, in which I could participate, that fever and all its consequences left me, and I experienced a great interior calm and joy. I then said: *Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst cure me.* My children and every thing else capable of attaching me to life came before me with such a flattering aspect, that I ardently besought Our Lord to perfect my cure, if such were His will: these emotions caused a slight perspiration, which forced me to remain in bed, and did not permit me to assure myself on that day whether I was really cured or not. I slept tranquilly during the night, and rose early next morning: from that day I experienced no return of my former pains, though I habitually rose early, and often remained up at night later than prudence

would permit. There was no crisis, nothing which could favor the opinion that my cure proceeded from natural causes; unite with me, then, in thanking the good God. It ought to be remarked that I fell ill on a Saturday, the Feast of our Lady of the Snow, 1826, and I was cured on a Saturday, the Feast of the Purification of the Holy Virgin, 1828.

P. S. The Altar of the Sacred Heart is to be erected in the Church of St. Paul, my parish.

Bordeaux, *May* 20, 1832.

CURE OF MDLLE. CASEBONNE, RELATED BY HERSELF, AND CERTIFIED BY SEVERAL WITNESSES WORTHY OF CREDIT.

I, the undersigned, Mary Martha V. Agatha Casebonne, of Pau, certify on my soul and conscience that the facts related below are true.

On the first of March, 1851, after much weakness and sharp pains in the spinal marrow, I was entirely deprived of the use of my limbs. Physicians and remedies were useless; the paralysis, instead of being arrested, progressed, and the month of May, 1857, found me as miserable an object as can well be imagined.

Several times I had received the last Sacraments. My arms were swollen to an incredible size, and the softest cushions were as instruments of torture to my back, on which three horrible tumors had gathered. I was so completely exhausted, that it seemed as though my miserable life could not possibly last much longer, when our Pastor received a letter stating the case of a young lady of Bourg, a child of Mary, who, afflicted with the worst form of spinal disease, had been instantaneously cured, after a novena to the Sacred Heart, by the intercession of the Venerable Margaret Mary.

This cure so struck the Pastor and my Director, that these gentlemen urged me to use the same means: but as I had already made several novenas, and each was but a new source of discouragement, I hesitated, I even resisted, and at last yielded merely in obedience to my Director, and to gratify my poor mother and family. For the rest, I

was ready now more than ever for all the sacrifices the good God should ask of me. The Pastor immediately wrote to ascertain what prayers had been said for the young lady already cured, and the reply, quickly forwarded, gave the necessary details, adding that the Sisters of the Visitation at Bourg, and the Children of Mary, of which society that young lady is a member, would unite in the novena to commence May 10. The exercises of the novena were these: Mass nine consecutive days, the litany of the Sacred Heart daily with three invocations: "Venerable Margaret Mary, hear us," and three Paters and Aves in honor of the Venerable Sister.

During the novena I became no better, I rather grew worse. The last day I had the happiness to receive the Holy Viaticum. While I thanked my Lord for His good visit, I felt in my whole person an unaccountable heat, and soon I began to perspire freely. Movement returned to my members, and soon, I know not how, I found myself on my knees without requiring any support; the same involuntary movements placed me in a standing posture. I made two or three steps to regain my bed, fearing that I was the victim of some illusion: the thought that I was cured never entered my mind.

But soon after, yielding to a new impulse for which I could not account, I arose again, knelt to thank God, and then commenced to walk. My limbs, paralyzed for six years, recovered sensibility and bravely sustained me. I felt no more pain in the spine, and the tumors had disappeared. I rested some hours; in the afternoon, when I laid the soles of my feet on the floor, I felt much pain, which hindered me from walking a great deal, but by degrees it vanished, and after some time there remained no trace of it.

Behold what Our Lord has deigned to do for me, through the medium of Blessed Margaret Mary. Let the name of the Lord be blessed! let the Blessed Sister receive honor and glory in this world, as we are persuaded she receives honor and glory before God!

Given at Pau, May 18th, of the year of grace 1858, one year after the event.

Seen and approved by us, the Bishop of Bayonne, being much interested in Mademoiselle Casebonne, whom we highly esteem, and whom we cordially recommend to the Venerable Sisters of Paray.

Signed, FRANCIS, Bishop of Bayonne.

Pau, in the course of the pastoral visitation, May 25, 1858.

We, the Bishop of Aire, formerly almoner to the Ursuline Convent of Pau, Vicar-General of Bayonne, and Pastor of the Parish of St. Martin, at Pau, have been intimately acquainted with Mdlle. Agatha Casebonne from her childhood, having prepared her for her First Communion, and received her later on as a Child of Mary, and always, as far as circumstances permitted, aided and directed her in the ways of virtue. We were not able to visit her during her illness as frequently as we desired, but from what we saw we judged her case hopeless. By herself we were invited to unite in the exercises of the novena, and from herself we learned the happy success of the united prayers. We have since had the sweet consolation of verifying her cure, and we have just read an interesting relation of it, the exactitude and truth of which it is a pleasure to us to guarantee.

Signed, PROSPER, Bishop of Aire and Dax.

Aire, May 31, 1858.

I, the undersigned, Pastor of St. James of Pau, certify that the facts related by Mdlle. Casebonne, concerning her sickness and her cure, are true in every particular. We have witnessed both, and have admired the Divine Providence in the signal and unexpected benefit of her cure.

Signed, P. BARDENAVE, Pastor.

Pau, May 26, 1858.

Witness of the long sufferings of my daughter, like herself, I can see in her cure only the hand of Divine Providence.

Signed, H. CASEBONNE.

I, the undersigned, Vicar of St. James of Pau, certify to have seen Mdlle. Agatha Casebonne during six years entirely deprived of the use of her limbs. I have several times administered the last Sacraments

to her, and have been witness of her sudden cure, the last day of a novena, made to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, through the intercession of the Venerable Margaret Mary.

Signed, COUDERANNE.

Pau, May 26, 1858.

I, the undersigned, Chief Engineer of Bridges, &c., for the Department of the Lower Pyrenees, certify that a friend of the Casebonne family came early in May, 1857, to ask my wife and myself to unite in a novena to the Sacred Heart through the intercession of the Venerable Margaret Mary, in favor of Mdlle. Agatha Casebonne, who had suffered from spinal disease and paralysis of the limbs. The day after the novena this person declared to us the sudden cure of Mdlle. Casebonne, whom we saw soon after in the Church of St. James.

Signed, E. FLOUCAUD DE FOURCROY.

Pau, May 27, 1858.

I add, that the details given us on this cure are wholly conformable to those contained in the declaration of the lady herself.

Signed, FLOUCAUD DE FOURCROY.

The officiating minister of Lons, undersigned, certifies that the facts related above are exactly as they have been stated.

Signed, BERGERET, Priest.

Lons, May 27, 1858.

We, the undersigned, Dominic Perrin and Aimé Casteran, lawyers of Pau, certify the truth of the facts above stated.

Signed, A. CASTERAN, D. PERRIN.

I, the undersigned, lawyer to the Imperial Court of Paris, certify that there exists between my family and that of Mdlle. Casebonne old relations of friendship, and that the facts above related are perfectly accurate.

Signed, CESAR CASAUBON.

Pau, June 5, 1858.

I, the undersigned, Mary Martha V. Agatha Casebonne, certify that

this copy is conformable in all respects to the original which I have placed in the hands of the Superior of Paray-le-Monial, whither I went in order to fulfil a vow, made at the moment of the novena.

I accomplished this vow, with ineffable delight, June 23, 1858. I ask the good Sisters of the Community of Paray to receive the expression of my profound gratitude, for their charity in receiving me. I beseech them to unite with me in thanking the Divine Heart of Jesus for the immense graces He has been pleased to accord me, and to ask for me of this Sacred Heart a perfect conformity to His adorable will, and the means to spread, as much as possible, the love and devotion of the Heart of Jesus.

M. M. V. Casebonne.

Monastery of the Visitation of St. Mary,
Paray-le-Monial, June 25, 1858.

No. 4.

THE PORTRAIT OF BLESSED MARGARET.

The grandmother of the actual descendants of the family of Margaret Mary was a Mdlle. Alacoque, of Bois-Ste. Marie, grandniece of Blessed Margaret.

This lady, who was a very virtuous and noble person, espoused M. Dulac de Savianges, and dwelt on the property of her husband in the Chateau de Savianges. She brought there some relics of her blessed aunt, and some mementoes of her uncle Chrysostom.

Among others, their portraits, which have been transmitted by inheritance to her grandchildren, and remained with them in their residence at Savianges.

At the request of the Bishop of Autun these portraits have been transported to Chalons, to be examined by an ecclesiastical and archæological commission, which has proved their authenticity by a *procès verbal*, dated December 13, 1864. This is attested by the following letter, addressed by Mgr. Bouange, Apostolic Notary, Vicar-General of Autun, to M. F. Delangle, who, in right of his wife, born Dulac, is the

happy possessor of the two portraits. We have caused that of Blessed Margaret to be engraved for the frontispiece of our present work.

We hope to respond to the wishes of all souls devoted to the worship of the Heart of Jesus by offering to them, with perfect certitude, the features of her who has revealed this Devotion, and illuminated the Church with a new splendor.

AUTUN, *January* 6, 1865.

SIR:—"You have done well in making known to the Bishop of Autun that you are in possession of two family portraits, one of which represents Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, and bears the date of 1680, the other her brother Chrysostom. I need not tell you, Sir, how happy we have been to learn this; till now we have had only pictures and engravings inspired by imagination.

"It is true that the nuns of Dijon thought they had an accurate likeness of your glorious kinswoman, in an effigy of wax taken, said they, immediately after her death, and which was photographed last year and spread through several dioceses of France; but doubts were soon raised as to the authenticity of this effigy; it was said to represent Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, a Carmelite of Beaume (Côte d'Or), who died in the odor of sanctity in the seventeenth century.

"Similar doubts were raised as to the authenticity of another effigy, nearly the same, which an ecclesiastic of Dijon sent last October to the Visitation of Autun. This ecclesiastic thought he could remember that the person who had given it to him, several years previous, told him it was an effigy of Blessed Margaret Mary.

"To put an end to all uncertainty regarding these effigies, and at the same time to prove the authenticity of the portrait you possess, I have deemed it necessary to hold an inquiry as complete as possible, and I wrote to his lordship, who was then at Rome, and who approved of the project.

"Consequently, two commissions were organized, one at Beaume, the other at Chalons-sur-Mer, and attended to this business on the twelfth and thirteenth of last December. The two wax effigies have been

confronted with the authentic portraits of Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, in possession of the Carmelites of Beaume, then with the portrait of Blessed Margaret Mary, transmitted as authentic to Madame Dulac Delangle by the Alacoques, her ancestors.

"The commission of Châlons examined also the historic documents you have produced to support the authenticity of this portrait. It bears testimony to its age, as stated by the date inscribed, and to the striking resemblance that exists between the features of Blessed Margaret and those of her brother Chrysostom.

"I have read to the episcopal council the *procès verbal* prepared by these two commissions, which count artists among their members. The conclusions were:—

"1. That the wax effigies to which I have already alluded represent Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, and not Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque.

"2. That the portrait possessed by you faithfully represents the illustrious virgin your relation, who has become the new glory of the Church of Autun.

"I am happy to tell you, Sir, that after mature examination of all contained procedures, the episcopal council fully adheres to all these conclusions. We shall be very grateful to you if you cause an exact copy of this precious portrait to be taken.

"I willingly authorize you to cause this letter to be inserted in any journals you may think proper; and I entreat you, Sir, to accept the assurance of my respectful and devoted sentiments.

"BOUANGE,

"*Vicar-General, Archdeacon of Autun.*"

[Seal of the Bishop.]

No. 3.

Litany in Honor of Blessed Margaret Mary.*

Lord, have mercy on us.	Kyrie, eleison.	
Christ, have mercy on us,	Christe, eleison.	
Lord, have mercy on us,	Kyrie eleison.	
Christ, hear us,	Christe audi nos.	
Christ, graciously hear us,	Christe exaudi nos.	
God the Father of heaven,	Pater de cœlis Deus,	Miserere nobis.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,	Fili Redemptor mundi, Deus,	
God the Holy Ghost,	Spiritus Sancte, Deus,	
Holy Trinity, One God,	Sancta Trinitas Unus Deus,	
Holy Mary,	Sancta Maria,	
Holy Mother of God,	Sancta Dei Genitrix,	
Holy Virgin of Virgins,	Sancta Virgo Virginum,	
St. John,	Sancte Joannes,	
St. Lazarus,	Sancte Lazare,	
St. Francis,	Sancte Francisce,	
St. Jane Frances,	Sancta Joanna Francisca,	
Blessed Margaret Mary,	Beata Margarita Maria,	
Precious Pearl,	Margarita pretiosa,	
Flower of the Fields,	Flos campi,	
Lily of the Valley,	Lilium convallium,	
Rose blooming from early morning,	Rosa mane florens,	Ora pro nobis.
Beloved Child of Mary,	Infans almæ Virgini carissima,	
Incense of Sweet Odor,	Thus suave redolens,	
Palm of Patience,	Palma patientiæ,	
Treasure of Charity,	Promptuarium charitatis,	
Despiser of the World,	Mundi contemptrix,	
Beloved Spouse of Christ,	Sponsa Christi prædilecta,	
Violet of the Garden of St. Francis,	Horti Salesiani viola,	
Brilliant Star amid Clouds,	Stella lucens in medio nebulæ,	
Model of Obedience,	Norma obedientiæ,	
Seraph at the Foot of the Altar,	Seraphim ante altare,	
Sanctuary of the Heart of Jesus,	Cordis Jesu Sacrarium,	
Delights of the Heart of Jesus,	Cordis Jesu deliciæ,	
Apostle of the Heart of Jesus,	Cordis Jesu præco,	
Plaintive Turtle,	Turtur gemens,	

Have Mercy on us.

Pray for us.

* This litany was approved for private recitation by the Bishop of Autun, 1864.

White Dove,
Rock unshaken amid Tempests,
Mistress full of Sweetness,
Angel of Holy Counsels,
Terror of Demons,
Merciful Friend of Sinners,
Tender Benefactress of the Poor,
Refuge of the Sick,
Holocaust of Divine Love,
Lamp sparkling on the Holy Candlestick,
New Star of the Church,
Joy of thy Holy Order,
Glory of thy People,
Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord!
Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, hear us, O Lord!
Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, O Lord!
Christ hear us, Christ graciously hear us!

Ant. The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls, who, having found one pearl of great price, went his way, sold all that he had, and bought it.

V. Grace is shed on thy lips.

R. Therefore hath God blessed thee forever.

Columba speciosa,
Rupes inter procellas immota,
Magistra suavissima,
Pii consilii Angele,
Dæmonum terror,
Peccatorum propitiatio,
Levamen pauperum,

Pray for us.

Ægrotantium medela,
Holocaustum divini amoris,
Lucerna splendens super candelabrum sanctum,
Novum sidus Ecclesiæ,
Sacri Ordinis lætitia,
Populi tui honorificentia,
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, parce nobis, Domine!

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, exaudi nos, Domine!

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis!

Christe, audi nos, Christe, exaudi nos!

Ora pro nobis.

Ant. Simile est regnum cœlorum homini negotiatori, quærenti bonas margaritas: inventa autem una pretiosa, dedit omnia sua, et comparavit eam.

V. Diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis.

R. Propterea benedixit te Deus in æternum.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast manifested by wonderful

ORATIO.

Domine Jesu Christe, qui investigabilis divitias Cordis tui

revelations to Blessed Margaret Mary the incomprehensible riches of Thy Heart: Grant that by her merits, and after her example, we may love Thee in all things and above all things, that so we may be worthy to have forever a place in Thy Heart, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth one God, world without end. Amen.

Beatæ Margaritæ Virgini mirabiliter revelasti: da nobis ejus meritis et imitatione, ut Te in omnibus et super omnia diligentes, jugem in eodem Corde tuo mansionem habere mereamur: Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia secula seculorum. Amen.

No. 1.

DECREE OF BEATIFICATION.

PIUS PP. IX.

AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM.

Auctor nostræ fidei et consummator Jesus, qui nimia ductus charitate, naturæ mortalis infirmitate assumpta, obtulit se in ara Crucis immaculatum Deo, ut nos a peccati teterrima servitute liberaret, nihil potius habuit, quam ut flammam charitatis, qua Cor ejus ureretur, in hominum animis modis omnibus excitaret, quemadmodum suis adseruisse discipulis novimus ex Evangelio: "Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?" Hunc vero charitatis ignem ut magis incenderet, sanctissimi Sui Cordis venerationem cultumque institui in Ecclesia voluit, ac promoveri. Ecquis enim tam durus ac ferrens sit, quin moveatur ad redamandum Cor illud suavissimum idcirco transfixum ac vulneratum lancia, ut animus ibi noster quoddam quasi latibulum ac perfugium habeat, quo se ab hostium incursione insidiisque recipiat, ac tueatur? Ecquis non provocitur ad prosequendum omni observantiæ studio Cor illud sacratissimum, cujus ex vulnere aqua et sanguis, fons scilicet nostræ vitæ ac salutis effluxit? Jam vero ad tam salutarem, ac debitum pietatis cultum instituendum, latique inter hominis propagandum eligere Servator Noster dignatus est Venerabilem Famulam suam Margaritam Mariam de Alacoque, religiosam

sororem ex ordine Visitationis Beatæ Mariæ Virginis, quæ quidem et innocentia vitæ et assidua virtutum omnium exercitatione, tanto officio ac muneri, divina adjuvante gratia, se dignam probavit. Hæc enim vero in oppido, cui nomen Lauthecourt, intra fines Diœcesis Augustodunensis in Gallia, honesto genere orta, jam inde a pueritia ingenium docile præ se tulit, moresque probos, et supra ætatem compositos, sic ut qualis esset futura, certis indiciis parentes omninarentur. Etenim adhuc puella ab oblectamentis, quibus illa ætatula capi solet, abhorrens, secretiora petebat domus cubicula, ubi intenta mente Deum coleret ac veneraretur, adolescentior autem frequentiam hominum devitans nihil magis habebat in deliciis, quam versari in templis assidue, precesque ad plures horas producere. Virginitatem emisso voto primis ab annis Deo consecravit, atque adeo jejuniis, flagellis, aliisque asperitatibus adfligere corpus instituit, ut iisdem quibusdam quasi spinis virginitatis florem septum custodiret. Mansuetudinis porro, atque humilitatis illustre documentum exhibuit. Etenim demortuo patre, matre vero tum ætate, tum gravi morbo confecta, ab iis, qui rei domesticæ curationem gerebant, sic dure atque aspere habita est, ut rebus etiam ad victum cultumque necessariis plerumque careret. Atqui tantam inclementiam atque injuriam, proposito sibi Christi patientis exemplo, complures annos æquo animo tulit. Novem annos nata ad Sanctissimum Eucharistiæ Sacramentum suscipiendum primum accessit, atque ex cœlesti dape tantum concepit charitatis ardorem, ut ignis ille divinus ex ejus ore atque oculis emicaret. Pari erga proximum charitate incensa, graviter dolebat miseram puerorem turbam fere a parentibus derelictam vitiis succrescere, rerum ad salutem æternam pertinentium ignaram, idcirco eos patienter erudiebat mysteriis fidei, ad virtutem informabat, et vero etiam non modicam quotidiani cibatus partem eisdem alendis detrahere sibi consueverat. Quum cœlestem sibi Sponsum delegisset, exhibitas a matre nuptias, licet opulentas atque illustres, constanter recusavit, et quo datam cœlesti eidem sponso fidem præstaret securius, de ingrediendo sacrarum virginum claustro cogitavit. Qua de re posteaquam diu multumque secum deliberasset, fusisque precibus Divinam consuluisset voluntatem,

annum agens ætatis suæ vicesimum tertium, in civitate, cui nomen Paray le Monial, intra fines Augustodunensis Diœcesis, religiosis sororibus ex Ordine Visitationis Beatæ Virginis adscita est. In tyrocinio quum se talem probasset, qualem et egregia ad virtutem indoles et innocenter acta vita portenderat, ad solemnia nuncupanda vota admitti promeruit. Quibus quidem nuncupatis videri cœpit ad religiosæ disciplinæ perfectionem concitato curso contendere; adeo sodalibus suis Deo dicatis virtutum omnium exemplar enituit. Mira quippe in ipsa elucebat humilitas, singularis et in obtemperando alacritas, et in quibus vis molestiis perferendis patientia, accuratissima legum vel minimarum observantia, in afflictando corpore assidua austeritas, numquam intermissum precationis studium, cui dies noctesque quum instaret alienato sæpe a sensibus animo, divinæ gratiæ donis uberrime perfundebatur. In recolendis autem Christi Domini cruciatibus tanto afficiebatur doloris sensu tantaque inardescebat amoris flamma, ut prope exanimis plerumque languesceret. Porro quum ob virtutis præstantiam omnium sibi sodalium admirationem conciliasset, puellis, quæ in tyrocinio versarentur, ad religiosam vitam exercendis informandis que præposita fuit: eique muneri nulla potuisset aptior inveniri quam Venerabilis Margarita Maria, utpote quæ commissas suæ fidei ac magisterio puellas ad ingrediendum atque excurrendum perfectionis iter erigeret, ac confirmaret exemplo suo Jam vero ante augustissimum Eucharistiæ Sacramentum eidem fervidius oranti significatum est a Christo Domino, gratissimum sibi fore si cultus institueretur sacratissimi Sui Cordis humanum erga genus charitatis igne flagrantis, ac velle Se hujus rei curam ipsi demandatam. Qua erat humilitate cohorruit Venerabilis Dei Famula, tanto se officio indignam existimans; sed tamen ut supernæ obsequeretur voluntati, utque desiderio suo faceret satis, divinum amorem in hominum animis excitandi, studiosi egit tum apud religiosas sui Cœnobii sorores, tum vero etiam apud omnes, quoad potuit, homines, ut Cor illud Sanctissimum divinæ charitatis sedem omni honoris significatione colerent ac venerarentur. Multæ idcirco et graves Venerabili Dei famulæ tolerandæ fuerunt molestiæ, plurimæ superandæ difficultates, numquam

tamen ipsa dejecit animum, et spe subnixa cœlestis auxilii tam operose ac constanter promovere institit id genus pietatis, ut divina favente gratia, non sine magno animarum fructu in Ecclesia auctum longe sit, ac propagatum. Denique dissolvi cupiens, ut ad cœlestes Agni nuptias, quas tantopere deperibat, advolaret, non tam morbo, quam flamma charitatis absumpta, diem obiit supremum decimo sexto kalendas Novembris Anno MDCLXXXX. Quæ de Venerabilis Margaritæ Mariæ sanctitate invaluerat opinio percrebuit magis postquam ipsa e vivis excessit, accedente præsertim prodigiorum celebritate, quæ Venerabili Dei Famula deprecante ferebantur contigisse. Quapropter anno MDCCXV, Augustodunensis Antistes de illius vita et moribus opportunas de more tabulas condendas curavit. Verumtamen, ne ad Sanctæ Sedis judicium deferri causa posset gravissimi rerum publicarum motus effecerunt, qui exeunte sæculo decimo octavo universam fere Europam perturbarunt. Sedata tamen turbulentissima procella tempore, postulatum est Apostolicæ Sedis judicium, et apud Consilium S. R. Ecclesiæ Cardinalium sacris ritibus tuendis præpositorum instituta de virtutibus quæstione, quibus Venerabilis Margarita inclaruisset, rebus omnibus diu multumque ponderatis. Nos tandem heroicum illas attigisse gradum ediximus decreto evulgato decimo kalendas Septembris Anno MDCCCXLVI.

Exinde in eodem Cardinalium Consilio proposita disceptatio est de miraculis, quibus Venerabilis Margaritæ sanctitas comprobata divinitus diceretur, ac postquam severo habito examine tum a Consultoribus, tum a Cardinalibus illa fuissent probata. Nos, implorato antea superni luminis auxilio, de eorumdem miraculorum veritate affirmativam evulgavimus sententiam, die octavo kalendas Maias anni vertentis MDCCCLXIV. Illud unum supererat, ut iidem interrogarentur Cardinales num procedi tuto posset ad Beatorum Cœlitum honores Venerabili Margaritæ tribuendos, iidemque coram Nobis coacti decimo octavo kalendas Julii vertentis anni procedi tuto posse unanimi suffragio responderunt. Nos porro, ut in tanta re, cœlestem opem adprecati die octavo kalendas Julii Anni ejusdem decrevimus deferri tuto posse, quum Nobis visum esset, Venerabili Servæ Dei Beatorum

honores cum omnibus indultis, donec solemnis Ejusdem canonizatio celebretur. Nos igitur, permoti precibus omnium ferme Sacrorum Galliæ Antistitum, necnon religiosarum sororum Ordinis Visitationis B. Mariæ Virginis, de consilio et assensu Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S. R. Ecclesiæ Cardinalium sacris ritibus cognoscendis præpositorum, auctoritate Nostra Apostolica facultatem impertimur ut eadem Venerabilis Dei Famula Margarita Maria de Alacoque Beatæ nomine in posterum nuncupetur, ejusque corpus et reliquæ, non tamen in solemnibus supplicationibus deferendæ, publicæ fidelium venerationi proponantur. Præterea eadem auctoritate concedimus, ut de illa recitetur officium et missa de communi Virginum cum orationibus propriis a Nobis approbatis juxta rubricas missalis et breviarii Romani. Ejusmodi vero missæ celebrationem, et officii recitationem fieri dumtaxat concidimus in Diœcesi Augustodunensi, ac in templis omnibus domorum ubicumque, existentium, in quibus institutus reperitur religiosus ordo monialium Visitationis B. Mariæ Virginis, die xvi; Octobris ab omnibus christi fidelibus tam sæcularibus, quam regularibus, qui horas canonicas recitare teneantur, et quantum ad missas attinet, ab omnibus Sacerdotibus ad templa, in quibus festum celebratur, confluentibus. Denique concedimus, ut anno a datis hisce Litteris primo, Solemnia beatificationis Venerabilis Servæ Dei Margaritæ Mariæ de Alacoque in Diœcesi, atque in Templis, de quibus habita mentio est, celebrentur cum officio, et missis duplicis majoris ritus, idque fieri præcipimus die per Ordinarios indicenda, ac posteaquam eadem solemnia in Basilica Vaticana celebrata sint. Non obstantibus Constitutionibus, et Ordinationibus apostolicis, ceterisque contrariis quibuscumque. Volumus autem ut harum Litterarum exemplis etiam impressis, dummodo manu Secretarii prædictæ Congregationis sacrorum rituum subscripta sint, et sigillo Præfecti munita, eadem prorsus fides habeatur, quæ nostræ voluntatis significationi hisce ostensis Litteris haberetur. Datum ex Arce Gandulphi sub Annulo Piscatoris die xix Mensis Augusti AnnoMDCCCLXIV, Pontificatus Nostri Anno Decimo nono.

N. Card. PARACCIANI CLARELLI.

No. 2.

DECREE ON THE VIRTUES.

DECRETUM AUGUSTODUNEN BEATIFICATIONIS ET CANONIZATIONIS VEN. SERVÆ DEI SOR. MARGARITÆ M. ALACOQUE, SANCTIMONIALIS PROFESSÆ ORDINIS VISITATIONIS BEATISSIMÆ MARIÆ VIRGINIS A S. FRANCISCO SALESIO INSTITUTI.

SUPER DUBIO:

An constet de Virtutibus Theologalibus Fide, Spe, et Charitate in Deum et Proximum; necnon de Cardinalibus, Prudentia, Justitia, Fortitudine, et Temperantia, earumque adnexis, in gradu heroico, in casu, et ad effectum, de quo agitur? Redemptor noster amabilis Christus Dominus, cujus deliciæ esse cum filiis hominum VEN. FAMULAM SUAM MARGARITAM MARIAM ALACOQUE supernis benedictionibus prævenit a teneris annis, eidem adolescenti peramanter adfuit, eamque in acerrima sæculi, carnis, et Dæmonis pugna roboravit. Ipsa in sacras Monialium Ædes se recipiens, post quartum ætatis suæ lustrum, ORDINEM VISITATIONIS BEATISSIMÆ VIRGINIS a S. Francisco Salesio institutum professa est. Assiduis jejuniis, vigiliis, verberibus in corpusculum sæviit: juveniles vanitates exosa omne pœnitentiæ et asperitatum genus aggressa est, præclarisque se virtutibus exercuit Flagrantissima præsertim in Redemptorem Jesum exardens charitate, ad ipsius amorem sacratissimi Cordis veneratione fideles omnes toto animo, ac fervidis verbis inflammare studuit assidue; donec anhelans dissolvi et esse cum Divino Sponso, piissime spiritum reddidit, Anno MDCXC., ætatis suæ quadragesimotertio.

VEN. MARGARITÆ vitæ ratio ob Virtutum sublimium exercitium, pœnitentiæ asperitatem, summumque in Jesu Christi patientis amorem, ejusdemque Ven. Virginis nomen late evulgatum permovit Augustodunensem Anno MDCCXV, ad Processum instruendum super Ven. Servæ Dei moribus, gestis, atque obitu: qui tamen Processus ob varias rerum vicissitudines, et Galliæ totiusque Europæ perturbationes sub finem transacti Sæculi tardius in lucem prodivit; et tandem ad Sacrorum Rituum Congregationem delatus fuit, ac receptus Anno

MDCCCXIX, una cum alio processu de continuata Ven. Servæ Dei Virtutum et Miraculorum fama. Deinde Anno MDCCCXXIV a sanctæ memoriæ Leone Papa XII. Commissio Introductionis Causæ signata est.

Ex tunc Apostolici Processus confecti fuerunt juxta Summorum Pontificum Decreta, ac jamdiu receptam consuetudinem, eaque omnia peracta sunt sedulo, quæ necessaria omnino erant in eadam Causa: et ideo plures iterum abierunt Anni, antequam ad inquisitionem Virtutum Theologalium et Cardinalium Ven. Servæ Dei procederetur. Post Annos itaque amplius centum quinquaginta a Ven. Margaritæ obitu, ad illius Virtutum disquisitionem deventum est die 28 Aprilis Anno MDCCCXL primum in Ædibus Reverendissimi Cardinalis Della-Porta, Causæ Relatoris. Iterum die 4 Aprilis Anno MDCCCXLIII, in Palatio Apostolico Vaticano ante Reverendissimas Cardinales Sacris Ritibus præpositos. Tandem die 4 Januarii Anno MDCCCXL, in eodem Palatio Apostolico Vaticano coram sanctæ memoriæ Gregorio Papa XVI., ubi, coacto Sacrorum Rituum generali Conventu, Reverendissimus Cardinalis Constantinus Patrizi, Relator, proposuit Dubium:—*An constet de Virtutibus Theologalibus et Cardinalibus, eorumque adnexis in gradu heroico, et ad effectum, de quo agitur?*—Et ipse Relator cæterique Reverendissimi Cardinales et Patres Consultores suffragia singuli protulerunt. Omnibus auditis, Summus idem Pontifex suam supremam sententiam elicere juxta morem supersederat, admonens superni luminis auxilium in hoc arduo judicio fervidis precibus esse poscendum. Quin autem suam mentem panderet, mortalem cum æterna vita commutavit. Illius in Summo Pontificatu Successor Sanctissimus Dominus Noster Pius Papa IX., rei cognita serie. Sacrorum Rituum generalia Comitia coram se habenda die 11 Augusti currentis Anni indixit, ut iterum quæstio de Virtutibus Ven. Margaritæ institueretur. Convenerunt itaque statuta die in Palatium Apostolicum Quirinale coram Sanctissimo Domino Nostro Pio Papa IX. Reverendissimi Cardinales, cæterique Patres: et quum Reverendissimus Cardinalis Patrizi, Relator, proposuisset idem Dubium:—*An constet de Virtutibus Theologalibus et Cardinalibus Ven. Margaritæ?*—

suffragia omnes et singuli tulerunt, quæ cum attente audisset Summus Pontifex, adhibendas esse preces dixit ad divinum lumen implorandum, antequam suam promeret sententiam. Quum itaque intensius orasset, et omnia secum mente revolvisset, animum suum patefacere statuit hac die Dominica XII post Pentecostem quum biduo ante celebratum fuisset festum S. Joannæ Franciscæ de Chantal Fundatricis Ordinis Visitationis Beatissimæ Mariæ Virginis a S. Francisco Salesio instituti, quem professa fuerat Ven. Margaritæ Ideo Sacris propitiato Deo accedens ad Sacram Ædem Monialium Visitationis SS^mus Dominus Noster PIUS PAPA IX., illuc adcersivit. R^mos Cardinales Tr. Ludovicum Micara Episcopum Ostiensem et Veliternum, Sacri Collegii Decanum, Sacrorum Rituum Congregationi Præfectum, et Constantinum Patrizi suum in Urbe Vicarium Causæ Relatorem, una cum R. P. Andrea Maria Frattini Sanctæ Fidei Promotore, atque infrascripto Me Secretario; ac solemniter pronuntiavit:—*Ita constare de Virtutibus Theologalibus et Cardinalibus earumque adnexis in gradu heroico Ven. Servæ Dei Sororis Margaritæ Mariæ Alacoque, ut tuto procedi possit ad discussionem Trium Miraculorum.*—Hoc autem Decretum evulgari, et in Acta Sacrorum Rituum Congregationis referri jussit decimo Kalendas Septemb. Anno MDCCCXLVI.

F. L. CARD. MICARA, S. R. E. PRÆFECTUS.

J. G. FATATI, S. R. C. SECRETARIUS.

Loco ✝ Sigilli.

No. 3.

DECREE ON THE MIRACLES.

DECRETUM AUGUSTUDUNEN, SEU ÆDUEN, BEATIFICATIONIS ET CANONIZATIONIS VEN. SERVÆ DEI SORORIS MARIÆ MARGARITÆ ALACOQUE, SANCTIMONIALIS PROFESSÆ ORDINIS VISITATIONIS BEATISSIMÆ MARIÆ VIRGINIS A S. FRANCISCO SALESIO INSTITUTI.

SUPER DUBIO:

An, et de quibus miraculis constet in casu, et ad effectum de quo agitur?

Divinæ illius Charitatis igne, quem Jesus Christus in terram mittere

venerat, Venerabilis MARGARITA MARIA ALACOQUE vehementer incensa nullum non movit lapidem, ut SACRATISSIMI CORDIS JESU a quo illud amoris incendium erumpebat, et qua quaversus diffundebatur venerationem ac pietatem in fidelium animis ubique terrarum constitueret, augeret, atque amplificaret. Et quamvis hæc Dei famula omnibus dum in humanis ageret virtutibus inclaruerit, tamen ardentissimus, quo agebatur, in COR JESU amor studiumque impensissimum, quo ad illud redamandum omnium corda excitare satagebat, ceterarum veluti virtutum compendium extitit. Postquam ergo, seraphicis consumpta ardoribus, ad gloriæ fastigium quod ejus sponsa assecuta fuerat in cœlis, signis ac portentis etiam innotesceret in terris. Instituta de iisdem per processuales tabulas disquitione, tria allata sunt in Sacrorum Rituum Congregationis judicium Miracula, quæ, deprecante famula Dei MARGARITA patrata divinitus ferebantur.

Itaque primum causa hæc agitari cœpit in Antipræparatorio Conventu, postridie Nonas Septembris Anni MDCCCLIX, penes Reverendissimum Cardinalem Constantinum Patrizi Episcopum Portuensem et S. Rufinæ, Sacrorum Rituum Congregationi Præfectum, et Causæ Relatorem. De ea iterum disceptatum fuit in Præparatorio Cœtu apud Apostolicas Vaticanas Ædes collecto, Decimo Septimo Kalendas Octobris anni MDCCCLXIII. Tertium denique hujusmodi Causa subiit experimentum, in generalibus Comitiis in eodem Vaticano Palatio coram SANCTISSIMO DOMINO NOSTRO PIO PAPA IX, habitis Kalendis Martii vertentis anni; in quibus quum Reverendissimus Cardinalis Constantinus Patrizi, causæ Relator, proposuisset dubium: "*An, et de quibus Miraculis constet in casu, et ad effectum de quo agitur?*" Reverendissimi Cardinales et Patres Consultores suffragia singuli protulerunt.

Quibus auditis, SANCTISSIMUS DOMINUS NOSTER noluit illico suam pandere mentem, sed omnes admonuit, ut adhibitis precibus ac postulationibus Sibi a Divina Sapientia impetraretur lumen ad supremum judicium suum pronuntiandum.

Tandem diem hanc designavit in qua solemnis recolitur commemoratio Sancti Fidelis a Sigmaringa Martyris. Itaque SANCTISSIMUS DOMI-

NUS NOSTER, postquam Sacra Mysteria in suo domestico Vaticano sacello piissime celebrasset, ad ædes Se contulit Collegii Urbani Sacræ Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, insignes Reliquias invictissimi Martyris hujus veneraturus; inde superiori in aula ad se accitis Reverendissimo Cardinale Constantino Patrizi, Episcopo Portuensi et S. Rufinæ, Sacrorum Rituum Congregationi Præfecto, Causæque Relatore, una cum R. P. Andrea, Maria Frattini, Sanctæ Fidei Promotore, et Me infrascripto Secretario, iisdemque adstandibus rite pronuntiavit: "*Constare de tribus Miraculus in tertio genere, Venerabili Margarita Maria Alacoque intercedente, a Deo patratis; nempe de primo: Instantaneæ perfectæque sanationis Sororis Mariæ Theresiæ Petit, Monialis Professæ Ordinis Visitationis Beatæ Mariæ Virginis, ab inveterato aneurismate in præcordiis; de secundo: Instantaneæ perfectæque sanationis Sororis Mariæ de Sales Charault, Monialis professæ ejusdem Ordinis, a cancro occulto in ventriculo; de tertio: Instantaneæ perfectæque sanationis Sororis Mariæ Aloisiæ Bellani, ejusdem Ordinis, a pulmonum phthysi tuberculari confirmata et incurabili gravissimis stipata symtomatibus.*"

Atque hoc Decretum in vulgus edi et in acta Sacrorum Rituum Congregationis referri jussit Octavo Kalendas Maris Anni MDCCCLXIV.

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PIUS P. P. IX.

Dilecte Fili, Salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem:

Litteræ Tuæ XIII. Kalendas Aprilis proximi ad nos datæ, quibus exemplar offerre nobis voluisti operis de historiâ Ecclesiæ generali, fuerunt nobis ipsis quam gratissimæ. Significas enim id Tibi fuisse consilii, quod virum certe decet germanæ doctrinæ studio ac singularis erga Nos ipsos sedemque Apostolicam devotionis et observantiæ laude præstantem. Si, ut confidimus, consilio ipsi opus quod adhuc legere Nos non potuimus, exacte respondeat, magno illud usui erit istic futurum addetque omnibus stimulos ad gravissimam eam ecclesiasticorum studiorum partem pœnitius internoscendam. Meritas pro oblato ipso operis munere cum Tibi, Dilecte Fili, persolvimus gratias, omnipotentem Dominum suppliciter

To our beloved Son, J. E. Darras, Priest at Paris.

PIUS P. P. IX.

Beloved Son, health and the Apostolic Benediction:

Your letter of the twentieth of March, accompanied by a copy of your General History of the Church, was most grateful to us. The plan of your work testifies your zeal for sound doctrine and your singular and praiseworthy devotion toward us and the Apostolic See. If, as we trust, the work (which we ourselves have not as yet been able to read) fulfills the design proposed, it will be of the greatest use, and will tend to stimulate a more profound study of this most important branch of Ecclesiastical Science. We give you, therefore, beloved son, merited thanks for your offering to us, and we earnestly pray Almighty God that He will multiply and preserve His gifts in you. And as a pledge of this great favor, we

exoramus, ut sua in te munera multiplicet ac tueatur. Et tanti hujus boni auspicem adjungimus Apostolicam Benedictionem, quam intimo paterni cordis affectu, ipsi Tibi, Dilecte fili, amanter impertimur.

add the Apostolic Benediction, which, with the sincere affection of our paternal heart, we lovingly impart to you.

Datum Romæ apud S. Petrum, die 8 augusti, anni 1855, Pontificatus Nostri anno X.

Given at St. Peter's, Rome, the 8th of August, in the year of our Lord 1855, and the tenth of our Pontificate.

Pius P. P. IX.

Pius P. P. IX.

From the Most Rev. John McCloskey, D. D., Archbishop of New York.

Dear Sir:—I am very glad to learn that you are about publishing an English version of the excellent Ecclesiastical History of the Abbé Darras. The auspices under which the translation is made, will, I am confident, secure for it both elegance and fidelity. I trust that your laudable enterprise will meet all due encouragement from the Catholic public.

Very truly, your friend and servant in Christ,

† John, *Archbishop of New York.*

P. O'Shea, Esq.
New York, *Dec.* 12, 1864.

From the Most Rev. M. J. Spalding, D. D., Archbishop of Baltimore.

Mr. P. O'Shea:

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and hope you will receive sufficient patronage to defray all expenses.

† M. J. Spalding, *Archbishop of Baltimore.*

Baltimore, *Dec.* 7, 1864.

From the Most Rev. J. B. Purcell, D. D., Archbishop of Cincinnati.

Cincinnati, *Nov.* 15, 1864.

Mr. P. O'Shea:

Dear Sir:—Permit me to take this occasion, in answering your Circular, to signify my concurrence in the judgment pronounced on the Ecclesiastical History of the Abbé Darras. Please send me five copies in volumes, cloth binding.

Respectfully yours,

† J. B. Purcell, *Archbishop of Cincinnati.*

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From Monseigneur Parisis, Bishop of Arras.

I have read nearly the whole of the first volume of your General History of the Church, and I have only congratulations to address to you upon the work. Its spirit is excellent, its doctrine sound, and its style clear and unaffected. To have ranged the facts of ecclesiastical history according to the succession of pontiffs, just as the events of a kingdom are frequently related in the order of reigns, is a very happy innovation. Your work is in every respect truly admirable. We see in it, distinctly portrayed, the Fathers of the Church and their writings, the martyrs and their sufferings, the heretics and their numerous errors. The Holy Scriptures, the canon law, and the whole discipline of the Church, are alike admirably expounded.

I do not hesitate to say to you, if the other three volumes are equal to the first, that your General History of the Church will become a class-book of the highest usefulness in our seminaries.

† P. L., *Bishop of Arras.*

From Monseigneur Debelay, Archbishop of Avignon.

We have caused the work to be examined by a competent judge, * * * and knowing well the excellent spirit by which M. L'Abbé is animated and his filial love for the Church, we approve and recommend his work.

† J. M. M., *Archbishop of Avignon.*

From Monseigneur Casanelli D'Istria, Bishop of Ajaccio.

I received your first two volumes in Rome, and after having examined them in my own way, I submitted them to the examination of two eminent men of learning here, Monseigneur Tizzani, Professor in the Roman University, and the celebrated Jesuit Father, Rev. P. Ballerini, Professor in the Roman College, no less renowned in the Holy City for his profound erudition.

I have the satisfaction of making known to you the fact that these rigid censors agree with me in the high estimate I have formed of your work. If the last two volumes are equal to the first (and of this I have no doubt), I shall not hesitate to request the superiors of my seminaries to adopt it in their institutions as the text-book of Ecclesiastical History; and I shall congratulate myself on having been one of the first to profit by the fruit of your labors. Meanwhile, may your enterprise prove a complete success, and may God bless a pen so usefully employed in the service of our Holy Mother the Church.

† X. T. Raphael, *Bishop of Ajaccio.*

From Monseigneur De Segur, Auditor of the Tribunal of the Rota, at Rome.

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each according to his measure, to increase the ranks of God's army; and let us humbly thank our Lord when He permits us to serve in His holy cause. * * *

L. G. De Segur.

From Very Rev. Father Etienne, Superior-General of the Lazarists.

I have charged with the examination of your work two Fathers who have been Professors of History for many years in the schools of our society. They unite in praising it in the highest terms. I therefore cheerfully add my approbation of your History to the many indorsements which you have received, and which no doubt you will still receive from other sources.

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